

Walter H. Page

The life and letters of Walter H. Page.
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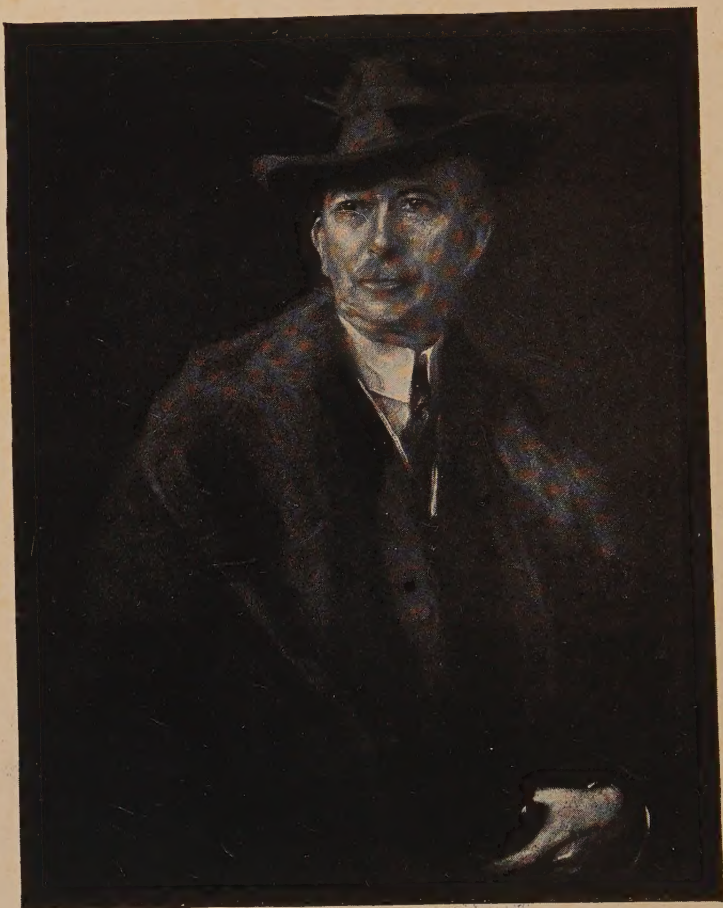
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THE
LIFE AND LETTERS
OF
WALTER H. PAGE



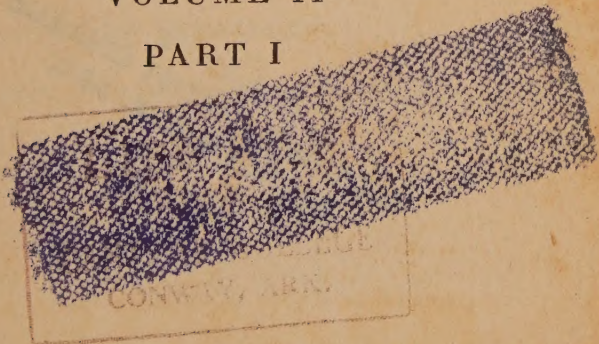
Col. Edward M. House. From a painting by P. A. Laszlo

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WALTER H. PAGE

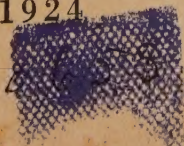
BY
BURTON J. HENDRICK



VOLUME II
PART I



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CHAPTER XIV

THE "LUSITANIA"—AND AFTER

I

THE news of the *Lusitania* was received at the American Embassy at four o'clock on the afternoon of May 7, 1915. At that time preparations were under way for a dinner in honour of Colonel and Mrs. House; the first *Lusitania* announcement declared that only the ship itself had been destroyed and that all the passengers and members of the crew had been saved; there was, therefore, no good reason for abandoning this dinner.

At about seven o'clock, the Ambassador came home; his manner showed that something extraordinary had taken place; there were no outward signs of emotion, but he was very serious. The first news, he now informed Mrs. Page, had been a mistake; more than one thousand men, women, and children had lost their lives, and more than one hundred of these were American citizens. It was too late to postpone the dinner but that affair was one of the most tragic in the social history of London. The Ambassador was constantly receiving bulletins from his Chancery, and these, as quickly as they were received, he read to his guests. His voice was quiet and subdued; there were no indications of excitement in his manner or in that of his friends, and hardly of suppressed emotion.

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The atmosphere was rather that of dumb stupefaction. The news seemed to have dulled everyone's capacity for thought and even for feeling. If any one spoke, it was in whispers. Afterward, in the drawing room, this same mental state was the prevailing one; there was little denunciation of Germany and practically no discussion as to the consequences of the crime; everyone's thought was engrossed by the harrowing and unbelievable facts which the Ambassador was reading from the little yellow slips that were periodically brought in. An irresistible fascination evidently kept everybody in the room; the guests stayed late, eager for every new item. When they finally left, one after another, their manner was still abstracted and they said their good-nights in low voices. There were two reasons for this behaviour. The first was that the Ambassador and his guests had received the details of the greatest infamy which any supposedly civilized state had perpetrated since the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. The second was the conviction that the United States would at once declare war on Germany.

On this latter point several of the guests expressed their ideas and one of the most shocked and outspoken was Colonel House. For a month the President's personal representative had been discussing with British statesmen possible openings for mediation, but all his hopes in this direction now vanished. That President Wilson would act with the utmost energy Colonel House took for granted. This act, he evidently believed, left the United States no option. "We shall be at war with Germany within a month," he declared.

The feeling that prevailed in the Embassy this evening was the one that existed everywhere in London for several days. Emotionally the event acted like an anæsthetic. This was certainly the condition of all Americans asso-

ciated with the American Embassy, especially Page himself. A day or two after the sinking the Ambassador went to Euston Station, at an early hour in the morning, to receive the American survivors. The hundred or more men and women who shambled from the train made a listless and bedraggled gathering. Their grotesque clothes, torn and unkempt—for practically none had had the opportunity of obtaining a change of dress—their expressionless faces, their lustreless eyes, their uncertain and bewildered walk, faintly reflected an experience such as comes to few people in this world. The most noticeable thing about these unfortunates was their lack of interest in their surroundings; everything had apparently been reduced to a blank; the fact that practically none made any reference to their ordeal, or could be induced to discuss it, was a matter of common talk in London. And something of this disposition now became noticeable in Page himself. He wrote his dispatches to Washington in an abstracted mood; he went through his duties almost with the detachment of a sleep-walker; like the *Lusitania* survivors, he could not talk much at that time about the scenes that had taken place off the coast of Ireland. Yet there were many indications that he was thinking about them, and his thoughts, as his letters reveal, were concerned with more things than the tragedy itself. He believed that his country was now face to face with its destiny. What would Washington do?

Page had a characteristic way of thinking out his problems. He performed his routine work at the Chancery in the daytime, but his really serious thinking he did in his own room at night. The picture is still a vivid one in the recollection of his family and his other intimates. Even at this time Page's health was not good, yet he frequently spent the evening at his office in Grosvenor

Gardens, and when the long day's labours were finished, he would walk rather wearily to his home at No. 6 Grosvenor Square. He would enter the house slowly—and his walk became slower and more tired as the months went by—go up to his room and cross to the fireplace, so apparently wrapped up in his own thoughts that he hardly greeted members of his own family. A wood fire was kept burning for him, winter and summer alike; Page would put on his dressing gown, drop into a friendly chair, and sit there, doing nothing, reading nothing, saying nothing—only thinking. Sometimes he would stay for an hour; not infrequently he would remain till two, three, or four o'clock in the morning; occasions were not unknown when his almost motionless figure would be in this same place at daybreak. He never slept through these nights, and he never even dozed; he was wide awake, and his mind was silently working upon the particular problem that was uppermost in his thoughts. He never rose until he had solved it or at least until he had decided upon a course of action. He would then get up abruptly, go to bed, and sleep like a child. The one thing that made it possible for a man of his delicate frame, racked as it was by anxiety and over work, to keep steadily at his task, was the wonderful gift which he possessed of sleeping.

Page had thought out many problems in this way. The tension caused by the sailing of the *Dacia*, in January, 1915, and the deftness with which the issue had been avoided by substituting a French for a British cruiser, has already been described. Page discovered this solution on one of these all-night self-communings. It was almost two o'clock in the morning that he rose, said to himself, "I've got it!" and then went contentedly to bed. And during the anxious months that followed the *Lusitania*, the *Arabic*, and those other outrages which have now

taken their place in history, he spent night after night turning the matter over in his mind. But he found no way out of the humiliations presented by the policy of Washington.

"Here we are swung loose in time," he wrote to his son Arthur, a few days after the first *Lusitania* note had been sent to Germany, "nobody knows the day or the week or the month or the year—and we are caught on this island, with no chance of escape, while the vast slaughter goes on and seems just beginning, and the degradation of war goes on week by week; and we live in hope that the United States will come in, as the only chance to give us standing and influence when the reorganization of the world must begin. (Beware of betraying the word 'hope'!) It has all passed far beyond anybody's power to describe. I simply go on day by day into unknown experiences and emotions, seeing nothing before me very clearly and remembering only dimly what lies behind. I can see only one proper thing: that all the world should fall to and hunt this wild beast down.

"Two photographs of little Mollie¹ on my mantelpiece recall persons and scenes and hopes unconnected with the war: few other things can. Bless the baby, she couldn't guess what a sweet purpose she serves."

The sensations of most Americans in London during this crisis are almost indescribable. Washington's failure promptly to meet the situation affected them with astonishment and humiliation. Colonel House was confident that war was impending, and for this reason he hurried his preparations to leave England; he wished to be in the United States, at the President's side, when the declaration was made. With this feeling about Mr. Wilson,

¹The Ambassador's granddaughter.

Colonel House received a fearful shock a day or two after the *Lusitania* had gone down: while walking in Piccadilly, he caught a glimpse of one of the famous sandwich men, bearing a poster of an afternoon newspaper. This glaring broadside bore the following legend: "We are too proud to fight—Woodrow Wilson." The sight of that placard was Colonel House's first intimation that the President might not act vigorously. He made no attempt to conceal from Page and other important men at the American Embassy the shock which it had given him. Soon the whole of England was ringing with these six words; the newspapers were filled with stinging editorials and cartoons, and the music halls found in the Wilsonian phrase materials for their choicest jibes. Even in more serious quarters America was the subject of the most severe denunciation. No one felt these strictures more poignantly than President Wilson's closest confidant. A day or two before sailing home he came into the Embassy greatly depressed at the prevailing revulsion against the United States. "I feel," Colonel House said to Page, "as though I had been given a kick at every lamp post coming down Constitution Hill." A day or two afterward Colonel House sailed for America.

II

And now came the period of distress and of disillusionment. Three *Lusitania* notes were sent and were evasively answered, and Washington still seemed to be marking time. The one event in this exciting period which gave Page satisfaction was Mr. Bryan's resignation as Secretary of State. For Mr. Bryan personally Page had a certain fondness, but as head of the State Department the Nebraska orator had been a cause of endless vexation. Many of Page's letters, already printed, bear evidence of

the utter demoralization which existed in this branch of the Administration and this demoralization became especially glaring during the *Lusitania* crisis. No attempt was made even at this momentous period to keep the London Embassy informed as to what was taking place in Washington; Page's letters and cablegrams were, for the most part, unacknowledged and unanswered, and the American Ambassador was frequently obliged to obtain his information about the state of feeling in Washington from Sir Edward Grey. It must be said, in justice to Mr. Bryan, that this carelessness was nothing particularly new, for it had worried many ambassadors before Page. Readers of Charles Francis Adams's correspondence meet with the same complaints during the Civil War; even at the time of the *Trent* crisis, when for a fortnight Great Britain and the United States were living on the brink of war, Adams was kept entirely in the dark about the plans of Washington.¹ The letters of John Hay show a similar condition during his brief ambassadorship to Great Britain in 1897-1898.²

But Mr. Bryan's incumbency was guilty of diplomatic vices which were peculiarly its own. The "leaks" in the State Department, to which Page has already referred, were constantly taking place; the Ambassador would send the most confidential cipher dispatches to his superior, cautioning the Department that they must be held inviolably secret, and then he would pick up the London newspapers the next morning and find that everything had been cabled from Washington. To most readers, the informal method of conducting foreign business, as it is disclosed in these letters, probably comes as something of

¹"A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861-1865," edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. Vol. I, p. 84.

²"The Life and Letters of John Hay," by William Roscoe Thayer. Vol. II, p. 166.

a shock. Page is here discovered discussing state matters, not in correspondence with the Secretary of State, but in private unofficial communications to the President, and especially to Colonel House—the latter at that time not an official person at all. All this, of course, was extremely irregular and, in any properly organized State Department, it would have been even reprehensible. But the point is that there was no properly organized State Department at that time, and the impossibility of conducting business through the regular channels compelled Page to adopt other means. “There is only one way to reform the State Department,” he informed Colonel House at this time. “That is to raze the whole building, with its archives and papers, to the ground, and begin all over again.”

This state of affairs in Washington explains the curious fact that the real diplomatic history of the United States and Great Britain during this great crisis is not to be found in the archives of the State Department, for the official documents on file there consist of the most routine telegrams, which are not particularly informing, but in the Ambassador's personal correspondence with the President, Colonel House, and a few other intimates. The State Department did not have the first requisite of a properly organized foreign office, for it could not be trusted with confidential information. The Department did not tell Page what it was doing, but it apparently told the whole world what Page was doing. It is an astonishing fact that Page could not write and cable the most important details, for he was afraid that they would promptly be given to the reporters.

“I shall not send another confidential message to the State Department,” Page wrote to Colonel House,

September 15, 1914; "it's too dangerous. Time and time again now the Department has leaked. Last week, I sent a dispatch and I said in the body of it, '*this is confidential and under no condition to be given out or made public, but to be regarded as inviolably secret.*' The very next morning it was telegraphed from Washington to the London newspapers. Bryan telegraphed me that he was sure it didn't get out from the Department and that he now had so fixed it that there could be no leak. He's said that at least four times before. The Department swarms with newspaper men, I hear. But whether it does or not the leak continues. I have to go with my tail between my legs and apologize to Sir Edward Grey and to do myself that shame and to do my very best to keep his confidence—against these unnecessary odds. The only way to be safe is to do the job perfunctorily, to answer the questions the Department sends and to do nothing on your own account. That's the reason so many of our men do their jobs in that way—or *one* reason and a strong one. We can never have an alert and energetic and powerful service until men can trust the Department and until they can get necessary information from it. I wrote the President that of course I'd go on till the war ended and all the questions growing out of it were settled, and that then he must excuse me, if I must continue to be exposed to this danger and humiliation. In the meantime, I shall send all my confidential matter in private letters to him."

Page did not regard Mr. Bryan's opinions and attitudes as a joke: to him they were a serious matter and, in his eyes, Bryan was most interesting as a national menace. He regarded the Secretary as the extreme expression of an irrational sentimentalism that was in danger of undermining the American character, especially as the kind of

thought he represented was manifest in many phases of American life. In a moment of exasperation, Page gave expression to this feeling in a letter to his son:

To Arthur W. Page

London, June 6, 1915.

DEAR ARTHUR:

. . . We're in danger of being feminized and fad-ridden—grape juice (God knows water's good enough: why grape juice?); pensions; Christian Science; peace cranks; efficiency-correspondence schools; aid-your-memory; women's clubs; co-this and co-t'other and coddling in general; Billy Sunday; petticoats where breeches ought to be and breeches where petticoats ought to be; white livers and soft heads and milk-and-water;—I don't want war: nobody knows its horrors or its degradations or its cost. But to get rid of hyphenated degenerates perhaps it's worth while, and to free us from 'isms and soft folk. That's the domestic view of it. As for being kicked by a sauerkraut caste—O Lord, give us backbone!

Heartily yours,

W. H. P.

In the bottom of this note, Page has cut a notch in the paper and against it he has written: "This notch is the place to apply a match to this letter."

"Again and ever I am reminded," Page also wrote in reference to Bryan's resignation, "of the danger of having to do with cranks. A certain orderliness of mind and conduct seems essential for safety in this short life. Spiritualists, bone-rubbers, anti-vivisectionists, all sort of anti's in fact, those who have fads about education or fads against it, Perfectionists, Daughters of the Dove of Peace, Sons of the Roaring Torrent, itinerant peace-

mongers—all these may have a real genius among them once in forty years; but to look for an exception to the common run of yellow dogs and damfools among them is like opening oysters with the hope of finding pearls. It's the common man we want and the uncommon common man when we can find him—never the crank. This is the lesson of Bryan."

At one time, however, Mr. Bryan's departure seemed likely to have important consequences for Page. Colonel House and others strongly urged the President to call him home from London and make him Secretary of State. This was the third position in President Wilson's Cabinet for which Page had been considered. The early plans to make him Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Agriculture have already been described. Of all cabinet posts, however, the one that would have especially attracted him would have been the Department of State. But President Wilson believed that the appointment of an Ambassador at one of the belligerent capitals, especially of an Ambassador whose sympathies for the Allies were so pronounced as were Page's, would have been an "un-neutral" act, and, therefore, Colonel House's recommendation was not approved.

From Edward M. House

Roslyn, Long Island,
June 25th, 1915.

DEAR PAGE:

The President finally decided to appoint Lansing to succeed Mr. Bryan. In my opinion, he did wisely, though I would have preferred his appointing you.

The argument against your appointment was the fact that you are an Ambassador at one of the belligerent

capitals. The President did not think it would do, and from what I read, when your name was suggested I take it there would have been much criticism. I am sorry—sorrier than I can tell you, for it would have worked admirably in the general scheme of things.

However, I feel sure that Lansing will do the job, and that you will find your relations with him in every way satisfactory.

The President spent yesterday with me and we talked much of you. He is looking well and feeling so.

I read the President your letter and he enjoyed it as much as I did.

I am writing hastily, for I am leaving for Manchester, Massachusetts, where I shall be during July and August.

Your sincere friend,

E. M. HOUSE.

III

But, in addition to the *Lusitania* crisis, a new terror now loomed on the horizon. Page's correspondence reveals that Bryan had more reasons than one for his resignation; he was now planning to undertake a self-appointed mission to Europe for the purpose of opening peace negotiations entirely on his own account.

From Edward M. House

Manchester, Massachusetts,
August 12th, 1915.

DEAR PAGE:

The Bryans have been stopping with the X's. X writes me that Bryan told him that he intended to go to Europe soon and try peace negotiations. He has Lloyd George in mind in England, and it is then his purpose to go to Germany.

I take it he will want credentials from the President which, of course, he will not want to give, but just what he will feel obliged to give is another story. I anticipated this when he resigned. I knew it was merely a matter of time when he would take this step.

He may find encouragement in Germany, for he is in high favour now in that quarter. It is his purpose to oppose the President upon the matter of "preparedness," and, from what we can learn, it will not be long before there will be open antagonism between the Administration and himself.

It might be a good thing to encourage his going to Europe. He would probably come back a sadder and wiser man. I take it that no one in authority in England would discuss the matter seriously with him, and, in France, I do not believe he could even get a hearing.

Please let me have your impressions upon this subject.

I wish I could be near you to-day for there are so many things I could tell that I cannot write.

Your friend,

E. M. HOUSE.

To Edward M. House

American Embassy, London [Undated].

DEAR HOUSE:

Never mind about Bryan. Send him over here if you wish to get rid of him. He'll cut no more figure than a tar-baby at a Negro camp-meeting. If he had come while he was Secretary, I should have jumped off London Bridge and the country would have had one ambassador less. But I shall enjoy him now. You see some peace crank from the United States comes along every week—some crank or some gang of cranks. There've been two this week. Ever since the Daughters of the Dove of

Peace met at The Hague, the game has become popular in America; and I haven't yet heard that a single one has been shot—so far. I think that some of them are likely soon to be hanged, however, because there are signs that they may come also from Germany. The same crowd that supplies money to buy labour-leaders and the press and to blow up factories in the United States keeps a good supply of peace-liars on tap. It'll be fun to watch Bryan perform and never suspect that anybody is lying to him or laughing at him; and he'll go home convinced that he's done the job and he'll let loose doves all over the land till they are as thick as English sparrows. Not even the President could teach him anything permanently. He can do no harm on this side the world. It's only your side that's in any possible danger; and, if I read the signs right, there's a diminishing danger there.

No, there's never yet come a moment when there was the slightest chance of peace. Did the Emperor not say last year that peace would come in October, and again this year in October? Since he said it, how can it come?

The ambitions and the actions of men, my friend, are determined by their antecedents, their surroundings, and their opportunities—the great deeds of men before them whom consciously or unconsciously they take for models, the codes they are reared by, and the chances that they think they see. These influences shaped Alexander and Cæsar, and they shaped you and me. Now every monarch on the Continent has behind him the Napoleonic example. “Can I do that?” crosses the mind of every one. Of course every one thinks of himself as doing it beneficently—for the good of the world. Napoleon, himself, persuaded himself of his benevolent intentions, and the devil of it was he persuaded other people also. Now the only monarch in Europe in our time who thought he had a

chance is your friend in Berlin. When he told you last year (1914) that of course he didn't want war, but that he was "ready," that's what he meant. A similar ambition, of course, comes into the mind of every professional soldier of the continent who rises to eminence. In Berlin you have both—the absolute monarch and the military class of ambitious soldiers and their fighting machine. Behind these men walks the Napoleonic ambition all the time, just as in the United States we lie down every night in George Washington's feather-bed of no entangling alliances.

Then remember, too, that the German monarchy is a cross between the Napoleonic ambition and its inheritance from Frederick the Great and Bismarck. I suppose the three damndest liars that were ever born are these three—old Frederick, Napoleon, and Bismarck—not, I take it, because they naturally loved lying, but because the game they played constantly called for lying. There was no other way to play it: they *had* to fool people all the time. You have abundant leisure—do this: Read the whole career of Napoleon and write down the startling and exact parallels that you will find there to what is happening to-day. The French were united and patriotic, just as the Germans now are. When they invaded other people's territory, they said they were attacked and that the other people had brought on war. They had their lying diplomats, their corruption funds; they levied money on cities and states; they took booty; and they were God's elect. It's a wonderful parallel—not strangely, because the game is the same and the moral methods are the same. Only the tools are somewhat different—the submarine, for example. Hence the *Lusitania* disaster (not disavowed, you will observe), the *Arabic* disaster, the propaganda, underground and above, in the United States. And

there'll be more. The Napoleonic Wars were about eleven years long. I fancy that we shall have war and wars from this attempt to dominate Europe, for perhaps as long a period. The Balkans can't be quieted by this war only, nor Russia and Italy perhaps. And Germany may have a series of earthquakes herself—internal explosions. Then Poland and perhaps some of the Scandinavian States. Nobody can tell.

I cannot express my admiration of the President's management, so far at least, of his colossal task of leading us right. He has shown his supreme wisdom up to this point and I have the profoundest confidence in his judgment. But I hope he doesn't fool himself about the future; I'm sure he doesn't. I see no possible way for us to keep out, because I know the ignorance and falseness of the German leaders. They'll drown or kill more Americans—on the sea and in America. They *may* at last even attack one of our own passenger ships, or do something that will dramatically reveal them to the whole American people. Then, of course, the tune will be called. It's only a question of time; and I am afraid the war will last long enough to give them time. An early peace is all that can prevent them from driving us at last into war; and I can see no chance of an early peace. You had as well prepare as fast as the condition of public opinion will permit.

There could be no better measure of the immeasurable moral advance that the United States has made over Europe than the incredulity of our people. They simply can't comprehend what the Napoleonic legend can do, nor the low political morality of the Continent—of Berlin in particular. Hence they don't believe it. We have gone on for 100 years working might and main to better our condition and the condition of people about us—the greatest effort made by the largest number of people since

the world began to further the mood and the arts of peace. There is no other such chapter in human history as our work for a hundred years. Yet just a hundred years ago the Capitol at Washington was burned by—a political oligarchy in the freest country of Europe—as damnable an atrocity as you will find in history. The Germans are a hundred years behind the English in political development and political morality.

So, let Willum J. come. He can't hurt Europe—nor help it; and you can spare him. Let all the Peace-gang come. You can spare *them*, too; and they can do no harm here. Let somebody induce Hoke Smith to come, too. You have hit on a great scheme—friendly deportation.

And Bryan won't be alone. Daughters of the Dove of Peace and Sons of the Olive Branch come every week. The latest Son came to see me to-day. He said that the German Chancellor told him that he wanted peace—wants it now and wants it bad, and that only one thing stood in the way—if England would agree not to take Belgium, Germany would at once make peace! This otherwise sensible American wanted me to take him to see Sir Edward to tell him this, and to suggest to him to go over to Holland next week to meet the German Chancellor and fix it up. A few days ago a pious preacher chap (American) who had come over to "fix it all up," came back from France and called on me. He had seen something in France—he was excited and he didn't quite make it clear what he had seen; but he said that if they'd only let him go home safely and quickly he'd promise not to mention peace any more—did I think the American boats *entirely* safe?—So, you see, I do have some fun even in these dark days.

Yours heartily,

W. H. PAGE.

IV

This letter discloses that Page was pinning his faith in President Wilson, and that he still had confidence in the President's determination to uphold the national honour. Page was not one of those who thought that the United States should declare war immediately after the *Lusitania*. The President's course, in giving Germany a chance to make amends, and to disavow the act, met with his approval, and he found, also, much to admire in Mr. Wilson's first *Lusitania* note. His judgment in this matter was based first of all upon the merits of the case; besides this, his admiration for Mr. Wilson as a public man was strong. To think otherwise of the President would have been a great grief to the Ambassador and to differ with his chief on the tremendous issue of the war would have meant for Page the severance of one of the most cherished associations of his life. The interest which he had shown in advocating Wilson's presidential candidacy has already been set forth; and many phases of the Wilson administration had aroused his admiration. The President's handling of domestic problems Page regarded as a masterpiece in reconciling statesmanship with practical politics, and his energetic attitude on the Panama Tolls had introduced new standards into American foreign relations. Page could not sympathize with all the details of the Wilsonian Mexican policy, yet he saw in it a high-minded purpose and a genuine humanitarianism. But the outbreak of war presented new aspects of Mr. Wilson's mind. The President's attitude toward the European struggle, his conception of "neutrality," and his failure to grasp the meaning of the conflict, seemed to Page to show a lack of fundamental statesmanship; still his faith in Wilson was deep-seated, and he did not abandon hope that the

President could be brought to see things as they really were. Page even believed that he might be instrumental in his conversion.

But in the summer and autumn of 1915 one agony followed another. The "too proud to fight" speech was in Page's mind nothing less than a tragedy. The president's first *Lusitania* note for a time restored the Ambassador's confidence; it seemed to show that the President intended to hold Germany to that "strict accountability" which he had threatened. But Mr. Wilson's course now presented new difficulties to his Ambassador. Still Page believed that the President, in his own way and in his own time, would find a path out of his dilemma that would protect the honour and the safety of the United States. If any of the Embassy subordinates became impatient over the procedure of Washington, he did not find a sympathetic listener in the Ambassador. The whole of London and of Europe might be resounding with denunciations of the White House, but Page would tolerate no manifestations of hostility in his presence. "The problem appears different to Washington than it does to us," he would say to his confidants. "We see only one side of it; the President sees all sides. If we give him all the facts, he will decide the thing wisely." Englishmen with whom the Ambassador came into contact soon learned that they could not become flippant or critical about Mr. Wilson in his presence; he would resent the slightest hostile remark, and he had a way of phrasing his rebukes that usually discouraged a second attempt. About this time Page began to keep closely to himself, and to decline invitations to dinners and to country houses, even those with which he was most friendly. The reason was that he could not meet Englishmen and Englishwomen, or even Americans who were resident in England,

on his old easy familiar terms; he knew the ideas which everybody entertained about his country, and he knew also what they were saying, when he was not among them; the restraint which his presence necessarily put upon his friends produced an uncongenial atmosphere, and the Ambassador therefore gave up, for a time, those distractions which had ordinarily proved such a delightful relief from his duties. For the first time since he had come to England he found himself a solitary man. He even refused to attend the American Luncheon Club in London because, in speeches and in conversation, the members did not hesitate to assail the Wilson policies.

Events, however, eventually proved too strong for the most devoted supporter of President Wilson. After the *Arabic* and the *Hesperian*, Page's official intimates saw signs that the Ambassador was losing confidence in his old friend. He would discuss Mr. Wilson occasionally, with those secretaries, such as Mr. Laughlin, in whom his confidence was strongest; his expressions, however, were never flippant or violent. That Page could be biting as well as brilliant in his comments on public personages his letters abundantly reveal, yet he never exercised his talent for sarcasm or invective at the expense of the White House. He never forgot that Mr. Wilson was President and that he was Ambassador; he would still defend the Administration; and he even now continued to find consolation in the reflection that Mr. Wilson was living in a different atmosphere and that he had difficulties to confront of which a man in London could know nothing. The Ambassador's emotion was rather one of disappointment and sorrow, mingled with anxiety as to the plight into which his country was being led. As to his duty in this situation, however, Page never hesitated. In his relations with his Embassy and with the

British world he maintained this non-critical attitude; but in his letters to President Wilson and Colonel House, he was describing the situation, and expressing his convictions, with the utmost freedom and frankness. In both these attitudes Page was consistent and absolutely loyal. It was his duty to carry out the Wilson instructions and he had too high a conception of the Ambassadorial office to show to the world any unfavourable opinions he may have held about his country's course. His duty to his post made it just as imperative that he set forth to the President the facts exactly as they were. And this the Ambassador now proceeded to do. For the mere ornamental dignities of an Ambassadorship Page cared nothing; he was wasting his health in his duties and exhausting his private resources; much as he loved the English and congenial as were his surroundings, the fear of being recalled for "disloyalty" or insubordination never influenced him. The letters which he now wrote to Colonel House and to President Wilson himself are probably without parallel in the diplomatic annals of this or of any other country. In them he told the President precisely what Englishmen thought of him and of the extent to which the United States was suffering in European estimation from the Wilson policy. His boldness sometimes astounded his associates. One day a friend and adviser of President Wilson's came into the Ambassador's office just as Page had finished one of his communications to Washington.

"Read that!" the Ambassador said, handing over the manuscript to his visitor.

As the caller read, his countenance displayed the progressive stages of his amazement. When he had finished, his hands dropped helplessly upon his knees.

"Is that the way you write to the President?" he gasped.

"Of course," Page replied, quietly. "Why not? Why shouldn't I tell him the truth? That is what I am here for."

"There is no other person in the world who dare talk to him like that!" was the reply.

This is unquestionably the fact. That President Wilson did not like people about him whose views were opposed to his own is now no secret, and during the period when his policy was one of the great issues of the world there was probably no one except Page who intruded upon his solitude with ideas that so abruptly disagreed with the opinions of the White House. The letters which Page wrote Colonel House were intended, of course, for the President himself, and practically all of them Colonel House read aloud to the head of the nation. The two men would closet themselves in the old cabinet room on the second floor of the White House—that same room in which Lincoln had met his advisers during Civil War days; and here Colonel House would quietly read the letters in which Page so mercilessly portrayed the situation as it appeared in English and European eyes. The President listened impassively, giving no sign of approval or disapproval, and hardly, at times, of much interest. In the earlier days, when Page's letters consisted of pictures of English life and English men, and colourful descriptions of England under the stress of war, the President was vastly entertained; he would laugh loudly at Page's wit, express his delight at his graphic and pungent style and feel deeply the horrors of war as his Ambassador unfolded them. "I always found Page compelling on paper," Mr. Wilson remarked to Mr. Laughlin, during one of the latter's visits to Washington. "I could never resist him—I get more information from his letters than from any other single source. Tell him to keep it up." It was during this

period that the President used occasionally to read Page's letters to the Cabinet, expressing his great appreciation of their charm and historical importance. "The President quoted from one of the Ambassador's letters to the Cabinet to-day," a member of the Cabinet wrote to Mrs. Page in February, 1915. "'Some day,' the President said, 'I hope that Walter Page's letters will be published. They are the best letters I have ever read. They make you feel the atmosphere in England, understand the people, and see into the motives of the great actors.'" The President repeated this statement many times, and his letters to Page show how greatly he enjoyed and profited from this correspondence. But after the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the *Arabic* his attitude toward Page and his letters changed.

He now found little pleasure or satisfaction in the Page communications. When Mr. Wilson found that one of his former confidants had turned out to be a critic, that man instantaneously passed out of his life. And this was now Page's fate; the friendship and associations of forty years were as though they had never been. Just why Mr. Wilson did not recall his Ambassador is a question that has puzzled Page's friends. He would sometimes refer to him as a man who was "more British than the British," as one who had been taken completely captive by British blandishments, but he never came to the point of dismissing him. Perhaps he did not care to face the public scandal that such an act would have caused; but a more plausible reason is that Page, despite the causes which he had given for irritation, was indispensable to him. Page's early letters had furnished the President ideas which had taken shape in Wilson's policies, and, disagreeable as the communications now became, there are evidences that they influenced the solitary statesman in the White House,

and that they had much to do in finally forcing Mr. Wilson into the war. The alternative question, as to why Page did not retire when he found himself so out of sympathy with the President, will be sufficiently answered in subsequent chapters; at present it may be said that he did resign and only consented to remain at the urgent request of Washington. In fact, all during 1915 and 1916, there seemed to be a fear in Washington that Page would definitely abandon the London post. On one occasion, when the newspapers published rumours to this effect, Page received an urgent despatch from Mr. Lansing. The message came at a time—the date was October 26, 1915—when Page was especially discouraged over the Washington policy. “Representatives of the press,” said Mr. Lansing, “have repeated rumours that you are planning to resign. These have been brought to the President’s attention, and both he and I have denied them. Still these rumours persist, and they cause both the President and me great anxiety. We cannot believe that they are well founded.

“In view of the fact that they are so persistent, we have thought it well to inform you of them and to tell you how earnestly we hope that they are baseless. We trust that you will set both our minds at rest.”

If Page had ever had any compunction about addressing the President in blunt phrases these expressions certainly convinced him that he was a free agent.

Yet Page himself at times had his doubts as to the value of this correspondence. He would frequently discuss the matter with Mr. Laughlin. “That’s a pretty harsh letter,” he would say. “I don’t like to talk that way to the President, yet it doesn’t express half what I feel.”

“It’s your duty to tell the President the real state of affairs,” Mr. Laughlin would urge.

“But do you suppose it does any good?” Page would ask.

"Yes, it's bound to, and whether it does or not, it's your business to keep him informed."

If in these letters Page seems to lay great stress on the judgment of Great Britain and Europe on American policy, it must be remembered that that was his particular province. One of an Ambassador's most important duties is to transmit to his country the public opinion of the country to which he is accredited. It was Page's place to tell Washington what Great Britain thought of it; it was Washington's business to formulate policy, after giving due consideration to this and other matters.

To Edward M. House

July 21, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

I enclose a pamphlet in ridicule of the President. I don't know who wrote it, for my inquiries so far have brought no real information. I don't feel like sending it to him. I send it to you—to do with as you think best. This thing alone is, of course, of no consequence. But it is symptomatic. There is much feeling about the slowness with which he acts. One hundred and twenty people (Americans) were drowned on the *Lusitania* and we are still writing notes about it—to the damnedest pirates that ever blew up a ship. Anybody who knows the Germans knows, of course, that they are simply playing for time, that they are not going to "come down," that Von Tirpitz is on deck, that they'd just as lief have war with us as not—perhaps had rather—because they don't want any large nation left fresh when the war ends. They'd like to have the whole world bankrupt. There is a fast growing feeling here, therefore, that the American Government is pusillanimous—dallies with 'em, is affected by the German propaganda, etc., etc. Of course, such a judgment is not fair.

It is formed without knowing the conditions in the United States. But I think you ought to realize the strength of this sentiment. No doubt before you receive this, the President will send something to Germany that will amount to an ultimatum and there will be at least a momentary change of sentiment here. But looking at the thing in a long-range way, we're bound to get into the war. For the Germans will blow up more American travellers without notice. And by dallying with them we do not change the ultimate result, but we take away from ourselves the spunk and credit of getting in instead of being kicked and cursed in. We've got to get in: they won't play the game in any other way. I have news direct from a high German source in Berlin which strongly confirms this. . . .

It's a curious thing to say. But the only solution that I see is another *Lusitania* outrage, which would force war.

W. H. P.

P. S. The London papers every day say that the President will send a strong note, etc. And the people here say, "Damn notes: hasn't he written enough?" Writing notes hurts nobody—changes nothing. The Washington correspondents to the London papers say that Burleson, the Attorney-General, and Daniels are Bryan men and are holding the President back.

The prophecy contained in this letter was quickly fulfilled. A week or two after Colonel House had received it, the *Arabic* was sunk with loss of American life.

Page was taking a brief holiday with his son Frank in Rowsley, Derbyshire, when this news came. It was telegraphed from the Embassy.

"That settles it," he said to his son. "They have sunk the *Arabic*. That means that we shall break with Germany and I've got to go back to London."

To Edward M. House

American Embassy, London, August 23, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

The sinking of the *Arabic* is the answer to the President and to your letter to me. And there'll be more such answers. You said to me one day after you had got back from your last visit to Berlin: "They are impossible." I think you told the truth, and surely you know your German and you know your Berlin—or you did know them when you were here.

The question is not what we have done for the Allies, not what any other neutral country has done or has failed to do—such comparisons, I think, are far from the point. The question is when the right moment arrives for us to save our self-respect, our honour, and the esteem and fear (or the contempt) in which the world will hold us.

Berlin has the Napoleonic disease. If you follow Napoleon's career—his excuses, his evasions, his inventions, the wild French enthusiasm and how he kept it up—you will find an exact parallel. That becomes plainer every day. Europe may not be wholly at peace in five years—may be ten.

Hastily and heartily,

W. H. P.

I have your note about Willum J. . . . Crank once, crank always. My son, never tie up with a crank. W. H. P.

To Edward M. House

London, September 2nd, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

You write me about pleasing the Allies, the big Ally in particular. That doesn't particularly appeal to me. We

don't owe them anything. There's no obligation. I'd never confess for a moment that we are under any obligation to any of them nor to anybody. I'm not out to "please" anybody, as a primary purpose: that's not my game nor my idea—nor yours either. As for England in particular, the account was squared when she twice sent an army against us—in her folly—especially the last time when she burnt our Capitol. There's been no obligation since. The obligation is on the other foot. We've set her an example of what democracy will do for men, an example of efficiency, an example of freedom of opportunity. The future is ours, and she may follow us and profit by it. Already we have three white English-speaking men to every two in the British Empire: we are sixty per cent. of the Anglo-Saxons in the world. If there be any obligation to please, the obligation is on her to please us. And she feels and sees it now.

My point is not that, nor is it what we or any other neutral nation has done or may do—Holland or any other. This war is the direct result of the over-polite, diplomatic, standing-alooft, bowing-to-one-another in gold lace, which all European nations are guilty of in times of peace—castes and classes and uniforms and orders and such folderol, instead of the proper business of the day. Every nation in Europe knew that Germany was preparing for war. If they had really got together—not mere Hague Sunday-school talk and resolutions—but had really got together for business and had said to Germany, "The moment you fire a shot, we'll all fight against you; we have so many millions of men, so many men-of-war, so many billions of money; and we'll increase all these if you do not change your system and your building-up of armies"—then there would have been no war.

My point is not sentimental. It is:

(1) We must maintain our own self-respect and safety. If we submit to too many insults, *that* will in time bring Germany against us. We've got to show at some time that we don't believe, either, in the efficacy of Sunday-School resolves for peace—that we are neither Daughters of the Dove of Peace nor Sons of the Olive Branch, and

(2) About nagging and forever presenting technical legal points as lawyers do to confuse juries—the point is the point of efficiency. If we do that, we can't carry our main points. I find it harder and harder to get answers now to important questions because we ask so many unimportant and nagging ones.

I've no sentiment—perhaps not enough. My gushing days are gone, if I ever had 'em. The cutting-out of the "100 years of peace" oratory, etc., etc., was one of the blessings of the war. But we must be just and firm and preserve our own self-respect and keep alive the fear that other nations have of us; and we ought to have the courage to make the Department of State more than a bureau of complaints. We must learn to say "No" even to a Gawdamighty independent American citizen when he asks an improper or impracticable question. Public opinion in the United States consists of something more than the threats of Congressmen and the bleating of newspapers; it consists of the judgment of honourable men on courageous and frank actions—a judgment that cannot be made up till action is taken.

Heartily yours,

W. H. P.

To Edward M. House

American Embassy, London, Sept. 8, 1915.

(This is not prudent. It is only true—nothing more.)

DEAR HOUSE:

I take it for granted that Dumba¹ is going, of course. But I must tell you that the President is being laughed at by our best friends for his slowness in action. I hardly ever pick up a paper without seeing some sarcastic remark. I don't mean they expect us to come into the war. They only hoped we would be as good as our word—would regard another submarine attack on a ship carrying Americans as an unfriendly act and would send Bernstorff home. Yet the *Arabic* and now the *Hesperian* have had no effect in action. Bernstorff's personal *note to Lansing*,² *even as far as it goes, does not bind his Government.*

The upshot of all this is that the President is fast losing in the minds of our best friends here all that he gained by his courageous stand on the Panama tolls. They feel that if he takes another insult—keeps taking them—and is satisfied with Bernstorff's personal word, which is proved false in four days—he'll take anything. And the British will pay less attention to what we say. That's inevitable. If the American people and the President accept the *Arabic* and the *Hesperian* and do nothing to Dumba till the Government here gave out his letter, which the State Department had (and silently held) for

¹On September 6th, certain documents seriously compromising Dr. Constantin Dumba, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, were published in the British press. They disclosed that Dr. Dumba was fomenting strikes in the United States and conducting other intrigues. The American Government gave Dr. Dumba his passports on September 17th.

²On August 26th, Count Bernstorff gave a pledge to the United States Government, that, in future, German submarines would not attack liners without warning. This promise was almost immediately violated.

several days—then nobody on this side the world will pay much heed to anything we say hereafter.

This, as I say, doesn't mean that these (thoughtful) people wish or expect us to go to war. They wish only that we'd prove ourselves as good as the President's word. That's the conservative truth; we're losing influence more rapidly than I supposed it were possible.

Dumba's tardy dismissal will not touch the main matter, which is the rights of neutrals at sea, and keeping our word in action.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. P.

P. S. They say it's Mexico over again—watchful waiting and nothing doing. And the feeling grows that Bryan has really conquered, since his programme seems to prevail.

To Edward M. House

London, Tuesday night, Sept. 8, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

The Germans seem to think it a good time to try to feel about for peace. They have more to offer now than they may have again. That's all. A man who seriously talks peace now in Paris or in London on any terms that the Germans will consider, would float dead that very night in the Seine or in the Thames. The Germans have for the time being "done-up" the Russians; but the French have shells enough to plough the German trenches day and night (they've been at it for a fortnight now); Joffre has been to see the Italian generalissimo; and the English destroy German submarines now almost as fast as the Germans send them out. I am credibly told that several weeks ago a group of Admiralty men who are in

the secret had a little dinner to celebrate the destruction of the 50th submarine.

While this is going on, you are talking on your side of the water about a change in German policy! The only change is that the number of submarines available becomes smaller and smaller, and that they wish to use Uncle Sam's broad, fat back to crawl down on when they have failed.

Consequently, they are laughing at Uncle Sam here—it comes near to being ridicule, in fact, for seeming to jump at Bernstorff's unfrank assurances. And, as I have telegraphed the President, English opinion is—well, it is very nearly disrespectful. Men say here (I mean our old friends) that with no disavowal of the *Lusitania*, the *Falaba*, the *Gulflight*, or the *Arabic* or of the *Hesperian*, the Germans are “stuffing” Uncle Sam, that Uncle Sam is in the clutches of the peace-at-any-price public opinion, that the United States will suffer any insult and do nothing. I hardly pick up a paper that does not have a sarcastic paragraph or cartoon. We are on the brink of convincing the English that we'll not act, whatever the provocation. By the English, I do not mean the lighter, transitory public opinion, but I mean the thoughtful men who do not wish us or expect us to fire a gun. They say that the American democracy, since Cleveland's day, has become a mere agglomeration of different races, without national unity, national aims, and without courage or moral qualities. And (I deeply regret to say) the President is losing here the high esteem he won by his Panama tolls repeal. They ask, why on earth did he raise the issue if under repeated provocation he is unable to recall Gerard or to send Bernstorff home? The *Hesperian* follows the *Arabic*; other “liners” will follow the *Hesperian*, if the Germans have submarines.

And, when Sackville-West¹ was promptly sent home for answering a private citizen's inquiry about the two political parties, Dumba is (yet awhile) retained in spite of a far graver piece of business. There is a tone of sad disappointment here—not because the most thoughtful men want us in the war (they don't), but because for some reason, which nobody here understands, the President, having taken a stand, seems unable to do anything.

All this is a moderate interpretation of sorrowful public opinion here. And the result will inevitably be that they will pay far less heed to anything we may hereafter say. In fact men now say here every day that the American democracy has no opinion, can form no opinion, has no moral quality, and that the word of its President never gets as far as action even of the mildest form. The atmosphere is very depressing. And this feeling has apparently got beyond anybody's control. I've even heard this said: "The voice of the United States is Mr. Wilson's: its actions are controlled by Mr. Bryan."

So, you see, the war will go on a long long time. So far as English opinion is concerned, the United States is useful to make ammunition and is now thought of chiefly in this connection. Less and less attention is paid to what we say. Even the American telegrams to the London papers have a languid tone.

Yet recent revelations have made it clearer than ever that the same qualities that the English accuse us of having are in them and that these qualities are directly to blame for this war. I recall that when I was in Germany a few weeks, six years ago, I became convinced that

¹Sir Lionel Sackville-West was British Minister to the United States from 1881 to 1883. In the latter year a letter was published which he had written to an American citizen of British origin, the gist of which was that the reelection of President Cleveland would be of advantage to British interests. For this gross interference in American domestic affairs, President Cleveland immediately handed Sir Lionel his passports. The incident ended his diplomatic career.

Germany had prepared to fight England; I didn't know when, but I did know that was what the war-machine had in mind. Of course, I had no opportunities to find out anything in particular. You were told practically that same thing by the Kaiser, before the war began. "We are ready," said he. Of course the English feared it and Sir Edward put his whole life into his effort to prevent it. The day the war began, he told me with tears that it seemed that his life had been wasted—that his life work had gone for naught.—Nobody could keep from wondering why England didn't——

(Here comes a parenthesis. Word came to me a little while ago that a Zeppelin was on its way to London. Such a remark doesn't arouse much attention. But just as I had finished the fifth line above this, Frank and Mrs. Page came in and challenged me to play a game of cards before we should go to bed. We sat down, the cards were dealt, and bang! bang!—with the deep note of an explosion. A third, a fourth shot. We went into the street. There the Zeppelin was revealed by a searchlight—sailing along. I think it had probably dropped its bombs; but the aircraft guns were cracking away at it. Some of them shot explosive projectiles to find the range. Now and then one such explosive would almost reach the Zeppelin, but it was too high for them and it sailed away, the air guns doing their ineffectual best. I couldn't see whether airplanes were trying to shoot it or not. The searchlight revealed the Zeppelin but nothing else.—While we were watching this battle in the air, the maids came down from the top of the house and went into the cellar. I think they've already gone back. You can't imagine how little excitement it caused. It produces less fright than any other conceivable engine of war.

We came back as soon as the Zeppelin was out of sight

and the firing had ceased; we played our game of cards; and here I am writing you the story—all within about half an hour.—There was a raid over London last night, too, wherein a dozen or two women and children and a few men were killed. I haven't the slightest idea what harm this raid to-night has done. For all I know it may not be all done. But of all imaginable war-experiences this seems the most futile. It interrupted a game of cards for twenty minutes!)

Now—to go on with my story: I have wondered ever since the war began why the Allies were not better prepared—especially England on land. England has just one *big* land gun—no more. Now it has turned out, as you have doubtless read, that the British Government were as good as told by the German Government that Germany was going to war pretty soon—this in 1912 when Lord Haldane¹ was sent to make friends with Germany.

The only answer he brought back was a proposition that England should in any event remain neutral—stand aside while Germany whipped Russia and France. This insulting proposal was kept secret till the other day. Now, why didn't the British Cabinet inform the people and get ready? They were afraid the English people wouldn't believe it and would accuse them of fomenting war. The English people were making money and pursuing their sports. Probably they wouldn't have believed it. So the Liberal Cabinet went on in silence, knowing that war was coming, but not exactly when it was coming, and they didn't make even a second big gun.

¹In this passage the Ambassador touches on one of the bitterest controversies of the war. In order completely to understand the issues involved and to obtain Lord Haldane's view, the reader should consult the very valuable book recently published by Lord Haldane: "Before the War." Chapter II tells the story of Lord Haldane's visit to the Kaiser, and succeeding chapters give the reasons why the creation of a huge British army in preparation for the war was not a simple matter.

Now here was the same silence in this "democracy" that they now complain of in ours. Rather an interesting and discouraging parallel—isn't it? Public opinion has turned Lord Haldane out of office because he didn't tell the public what he declares they wouldn't have believed. If the English had raised an army in 1912, and made a lot of big guns, Austria would not have trampled Serbia in the earth. There would have been no war now; and the strong European Powers might have made then the same sort of protective peace-insurance combine that they will try to make after this war is ended. Query: A democracy's inability to *act*—how much is this apparently inherent quality of a democracy to blame for this war and for—other things?

When I am asked every day "Why the United States doesn't *do* something—send Dumba and Bernstorff home?"—Well, it is not the easiest question in the world to answer.

Yours heartily,

W. H. P.

P. S. This is the most comical of all worlds: While I was writing this, it seems the maids went back upstairs and lighted their lights without pulling their shades down—they occupy three rooms, in front. The doorbell rang furiously. Here were more than half a dozen policemen and special constables—must investigate! "One light would be turned on, another would go out; another one on!"—etc., etc. Frank tackled them, told 'em it was only the maids going to bed, forgetting to pull down the shades. Spies and signalling were in the air! So, in the morning, I'll have to send over to the Foreign Office and explain. The Zeppelin did more "frightfulness" than I had supposed, after all. Doesn't this strike you as comical?

W. H. P.

Friday, September 10, 1915.

P. S. The news is just come that Dumba is dismissed. That will clear the atmosphere—a little, but only a little. Dumba committed a diplomatic offence. The German Government has caused the death of United States citizens, has defied us, has declared it had changed its policy and yet has gone on with the same old policy. Besides, Bernstorff has done everything that Dumba did except employ Archibald, which was a mere incident of the game. The President took a strong stand: they have disregarded it—no apology nor reparation for a single boat that has been sunk. Now the English opinion of the Germans is hardly a calm, judicial opinion—of course not. There may be facts that have not been made known. There must be good reasons that nobody here can guess, why the President doesn't act in the long succession of German acts against us. *But I tell you with all solemnity that British opinion and the British Government have absolutely lost their respect for us and their former high estimate of the President. And that former respect is gone for good unless he acts now very quickly.*¹ They will pay nothing more than formal and polite attention to anything we may hereafter say. This is not resentful. They don't particularly care for us to get into the war. Their feeling (I mean among our best old friends) is not resentful. It is simply sorrowful. They had the highest respect for our people and our President. The Germans defy us; we sit in silence. They conclude here that we'll submit to anything from anybody. We'll write strong notes—nothing more.

I can't possibly exaggerate the revulsion of feeling. Members of the Government say (in private, of course) that we'll submit to any insult. The newspapers refuse

¹The italics are Page's.

to publish articles which attempt to make the President's silence reasonable. "It isn't defensible," they say, "and they would only bring us thousands of insulting letters from our readers." I can't think of a paper nor of a man who has a good word to say for us—except, perhaps, a few Quaker peace-at-any-price people. And our old friends are disappointed and sorrowful. They feel that we have dropped out of a position of influence in the world.

I needn't and can't write more. Of course there are more important things than English respect. But the English think that every Power has lost respect for us—the Germans most of all. And (unless the President acts very rigorously and very quickly) we'll have to get along a long time without British respect.

W. H. P.

P. S. The last Zeppelin raid—which interrupted the game of cards—killed more than twenty persons and destroyed more than seven million dollars' worth of private business property—all non-combatants'!

W. H. P.

To Edward M. House

21st of September, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

The insulting cartoon that I enclose (destroy it without showing it) is typical of, I suppose, five hundred that have appeared here within a month. This represents the feeling and opinion of the average man. They say we wrote brave notes and made courageous demands, to none of which a satisfactory reply has come, but only more outrages and no guarantee for the future. Yet we will not even show our displeasure by sending Berns-

torff home. We've simply "gone out," like a snuffed candle, in the regard and respect of the vast volume of British opinion. (The last *Punch* had six ridiculing allusions to our "fall.")

It's the loneliest time I've had in England. There's a tendency to avoid me.

They can't understand here the continued declaration in the United States that the British Government is trying to take our trade—to use its blockade and navy with the direct purpose of giving British trade profit out of American detentions. Of course, the Government had no such purpose and has done no such thing—with any such purpose. It isn't thinking about trade but only about war.

The English think they see in this the effect on our Government and on American opinion of the German propaganda. I have had this trade-accusation investigated half a dozen times—the accusation that this Government is using its military power for its own trade advantage to our detriment: it simply isn't true. They stop our cargoes, not for their advantage, but wholly to keep things from the enemy. Study our own trade reports.

In a word, our importers are playing (so the English think) directly into the hands of the Germans. So matters go on from bad to worse.

Bryce¹ is very sad. He confessed to me yesterday the utter hopelessness of the two people's ever understanding one another.

The military situation is very blue—very blue. The general feeling is that the long war will begin next March and end—nobody dares predict.

W. H. P.

¹Viscount Bryce, author of "The American Commonwealth" and British Ambassador to the United States, 1907–1913.

P. S. There's not a moral shadow of a doubt (1) that the commander of the submarine that sunk the *Arabic* is dead—although he makes reports to his government! nor (2) that the *Hesperian* was torpedoed. The State Department has a piece of the torpedo.

V

The letters which Page sent directly to the President were just as frank. "Incidents occur nearly every day," he wrote to President Wilson in the autumn of 1915, "which reveal the feeling that the Germans have taken us in. Last week one of our naval men, Lieutenant McBride, who has just been ordered home, asked the Admiralty if he might see the piece of metal found on the deck of the *Hesperian*. Contrary to their habit, the British officer refused. 'Take my word for it,' he said. 'She was torpedoed. Why do you wish to investigate? Your country will do nothing—will accept any excuse, any insult and—do nothing.' When McBride told me this, I went at once to the Foreign Office and made a formal request that this metal should be shown to our naval attaché, who (since Symington is with the British fleet and McBride has been ordered home) is Lieutenant Towers. Towers was sent for and everything that the Admiralty knows was shown to him and I am sending that piece of metal by this mail. But to such a pass has the usual courtesy of a British naval officer come. There are many such instances of changed conduct. They are not hard to endure nor to answer and are of no consequence in themselves but only for what they denote. They're a part of war's bitterness. But my mind runs ahead and I wonder how Englishmen will look at this subject five years hence, and it runs afield and I wonder how the Germans will regard it. A sort of pro-German

American newspaper correspondent came along the other day from the German headquarters; and he told me that one of the German generals remarked to him: 'War with America? Ach no! Not war. If trouble should come, we'd send over a platoon of our policemen to whip your little army.' (He didn't say just how he'd send 'em.)"

To the President

American Embassy, London, Oct. 5, 1915.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I have two letters that I have lately written to you but which I have not sent because they utterly lack good cheer. After reading them over, I have not liked to send them. Yet I should fail of my duty if I did not tell you bad news as well as good.

The high esteem in which our Government was held when the first *Lusitania* note to Germany was sent seems all changed to indifference or pity—not hatred or hostility, but a sort of hopeless and sad pity. That ship was sunk just five months ago; the German Government (or its Ambassador) is yet holding conversations about the principle involved, making "concessions" and promises for the future, and so far we have done nothing to hold the Germans to accountability.¹ In the meantime their submarine fleet has been so reduced that probably the future will take care of itself and we shall be used as a sort of excuse for their failure. This is what the English think and say; and they explain our failure to act by concluding that the peace-at-any-price sentiment dominates the Government and paralyzes it. They have now, I think, given up hope that we will ever take any action.

¹In a communication sent February 10, 1915, President Wilson warned the German Government that he would hold it to a "strict accountability" for the loss of American lives by illegal submarine attack.

So deeply rooted (and, I fear, permanent) is this feeling that every occurrence is made to fit into and to strengthen this supposition. When Dumba was dismissed, they said: "Dumba, merely the abject tool of German intrigue. Why not Bernstorff?" When the Anglo-French loan¹ was oversubscribed, they said: "The people's sympathy is most welcome, but their Government is paralyzed." Their respect has gone—at least for the time being.

It is not that they expect us to go to war: many, in fact, do not wish us to. They expected that we would be as good as our word and hold the Germans to accountability. Now I fear they think little of our word. I shudder to think what our relations might be if Sir Edward Grey were to yield to another as Foreign Minister, as, of course, he must yield at some time.

The press has less to say than it had a few weeks ago. *Punch*, for instance, which ridiculed and pitied us in six cartoons and articles in each of two succeeding numbers, entirely forgets us this week. But they've all said their say. I am, in a sense, isolated—lonely in a way that I have never before been. I am not exactly avoided, I hope, but I surely am not sought. They have a polite feeling that they do not wish to offend me and that to make sure of this the safest course is to let me alone. There is no mistaking the great change in the attitude of men I know, both in official and private life.

It comes down and comes back to this—that for five months after the sinking of the *Lusitania* the Germans are yet playing with us, that we have not sent Bernstorff home, and hence that we will submit to any rebuff or any indignity. It is under these conditions—under this judgment of us—that we now work—the English respect for

¹A reference to the Anglo-French loan for \$500,000,000, placed in the United States in the autumn of 1915.

our Government indefinitely lessened and instead of the old-time respect a sad pity. I cannot write more.

Heartily yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

"I have authoritatively heard," Page writes to President Wilson in early September, "of a private conversation between a leading member of the Cabinet and a group of important officials all friendly to us in which all sorrowfully expressed the opinion that the United States will submit to any indignity and that no effect is now to be hoped for from its protests against unlawful submarine attacks or against anything else. The inactivity of our Government, or its delay, which they assume is the same as inactivity, is attributed to domestic politics or to the lack of national consciousness or unity.

"No explanation has appeared in the British press of our Government's inactivity or of any regret or promise of reparation by Germany for the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the *Falaba*, the *Gulflight*, the *Nebraskan*, the *Arabic*, or the *Hesperian*, nor any explanation of a week's silence about the Dumba letter; and the conclusion is drawn that, in the absence of action by us, all these acts have been practically condoned.

"I venture to suggest that such explanations be made public as will remove, if possible, the practically unanimous conclusion here that our Government will permit these and similar future acts to be explained away. I am surprised almost every hour by some new evidence of the loss of respect for our Government, which, since the sinking of the *Arabic*, has become so great as to warrant calling it a complete revulsion of English feeling toward the United States. There is no general wish for us to enter the war, but there is genuine sorrow that we are thought to submit to any

indignity, especially after having taken a firm stand. I conceive I should be lacking in duty if I did not report this rapid and unfortunate change in public feeling, which seems likely to become permanent unless facts are quickly made public which may change it."

There are many expressions of such feelings in Page's letters of this time. They brought only the most perfunctory acknowledgment from the White House. On January 3, 1916, Page sent the President a mass of clippings from the British press, all criticizing the Wilson Administration in unrestrained terms. In his comment on these, he writes the President:

"Public opinion, both official and unofficial, is expressed by these newspaper comments, with far greater restraint than it is expressed in private conversation. Ridicule of the Administration runs through the programmes of the theatres; it inspires hundreds of cartoons; it is a staple of conversation at private dinners and in the clubs. The most serious class of Englishmen, including the best friends of the United States, feel that the Administration's reliance on notes has reduced our Government to a third- or fourth-rate power. There is even talk of spheres of German influence in the United States as in China. No government could fall lower in English opinion than we shall fall if more notes are sent to Austria or to Germany. The only way to keep any shred of English respect is the immediate dismissal without more parleying of every German and Austrian official at Washington. Nobody here believes that such an act would provoke war.

"I can do no real service by mincing matters. My previous telegrams and letters have been purposely restrained as this one is. We have now come to the parting of the ways. If English respect be worth preserving

at all, it can be preserved only by immediate action. Any other course than immediate severing of diplomatic relations with both Germany and Austria will deepen the English opinion into a conviction that the Administration was insincere when it sent the *Lusitania* notes and that its notes and protests need not be taken seriously on any subject. And English opinion is allied opinion. The Italian Ambassador¹ said to me, 'What has happened? The United States of to-day is not the United States I knew fifteen years ago, when I lived in Washington.' French officers and members of the Government who come here express themselves even more strongly than do the British. The British newspapers to-day publish translations of ridicule of the United States from German papers."

To the President

London,
January 5, 1916.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I wish—an impossible thing of course—that some sort of guidance could be given to the American correspondents of the English newspapers. Almost every day they telegraph about the visits of the Austrian Chargé or the German Ambassador to the State Department to assure Mr. Lansing that their governments will of course make a satisfactory explanation of the latest torpedo-act in the Mediterranean or to "take one further step in reaching a satisfactory understanding about the *Lusitania*." They usually go on to say also that more notes are in preparation to Germany or to Austria. The impression made upon the European mind is that the German and Austrian officials in Washington are leading the Administration on

¹The Marquis Imperiali.

to endless discussion, endless notes, endless hesitation. Nobody in Europe regards their pledges or promises as worth anything at all: the *Arabic* follows the *Lusitania*, the *Hesperian* follows the *Arabic*, the *Persia* follows the *Ancona*. "Still conferences and notes continue," these people say, "proving that the American Government, which took so proper and high a stand in the *Lusitania* notes, is paralyzed—in a word is hoodwinked and 'worked' by the Germans." And so long as these diplomatic representatives are permitted to remain in the United States, "to explain," "to parley" and to declare that the destruction of American lives and property is disavowed by their governments, atrocities on sea and land will of course continue; and they feel that our Government, by keeping these German and Austrian representatives in Washington, condones and encourages them and their governments.

This is a temperate and even restrained statement of the English feeling and (as far as I can make out) of the whole European feeling.

It has been said here that every important journal published in neutral or allied European countries, daily, weekly, or monthly, which deals with public affairs, has expressed a loss of respect for the United States Government and that most of them make continuous severe criticisms (with surprise and regret) of our failure by action to live up to the level of our *Lusitania* notes. I had (judiciously) two American journalists, resident here—men of judgment and character—to inquire how true this declaration is. After talking with neutral and allied journalists here and with men whose business it is to read the journals of the Continent, they reported that this declaration is substantially true—that the whole European press (outside Germany and its allies) uses the same tone

toward our Government that the English press uses—to-day, disappointment verging on contempt; and many of them explain our keeping diplomatic intercourse with Germany by saying that we are afraid of the German vote, or of civil war, or that the peace-at-any-price people really rule the United States and have paralyzed our power to act—even to cut off diplomatic relations with governments that have insulted and defied us.

Another (similar) declaration is that practically all men of public influence in England and in the European allied and neutral countries have publicly or privately expressed themselves to the same effect. The report that I have about this is less definite than about the newspapers, for, of course, no one can say just what proportion of men of public influence have so expressed themselves; but the number who have so expressed themselves is overwhelming.

In this Kingdom, where I can myself form some opinion more or less accurate, and where I can check or verify my opinion by various methods—I am afraid, as I have frequently already reported, that the generation now living will never wholly regain the respect for our Government that it had a year ago. I will give you three little indications of this feeling; it would be easy to write down hundreds of them:

(One) The governing class: Mr. X [a cabinet member] told Mrs. Page a few nights ago that for sentimental reasons only he would be gratified to see the United States in the war along with the Allies, but that merely sentimental reasons were not a sufficient reason for war—by no means; that he felt most grateful for the sympathetic attitude of the large mass of the American people, that he had no right to expect anything from our Government, whose neutral position was entirely proper. Then he added; "But what I can't for the life of me understand is your

Government's failure to express its disapproval of the German utter disregard of its *Lusitania* notes. After eight months, it has done nothing but write more notes. My love for America, I must confess, is offended at this inaction and—puzzled. I can't understand it. You will pardon me, I am sure."

(Two) "Middle Class" opinion: A common nickname for Americans in the financial and newspaper districts of London is "Too-prouds."

(Three) The man in the street: At one of the moving picture shows in a large theatre a little while ago they filled in an interval by throwing on the screen the picture of the monarch, or head of state, and of the flag of each of the principal nations. When the American picture appeared, there was such hissing and groaning as caused the managers hastily to move that picture off the screen.

Some time ago I wrote House of some such incidents and expressions as these; and he wrote me that they were only part and parcel of the continuous British criticism of their own Government—in other words, a part of the passing hysteria of war. This remark shows how House was living in an atmosphere of illusion.

As the matter stands to-day our Government has sunk lower, as regards British and European opinion, than it has ever been in our time, not as a part of the hysteria of war but as a result of this process of reasoning, whether it be right or wrong:

We said that we should hold the Germans to strict accountability on account of the *Lusitania*. We have not settled that yet and we still allow the German Ambassador to discuss it after the *Hesperian* and other such acts showed that his *Arabic* pledge was worthless.

The *Lusitania* grows larger and larger in European memory and imagination. It looks as if it would become

the great type of war atrocities and barbarities. I have seen pictures of the drowned women and children used even on Christmas cards. And there is documentary proof in our hands that the warning, which was really an advance announcement, of that disaster was paid for by the German Ambassador and charged to his Government. It is the *Lusitania* that has caused European opinion to regard our foreign policy as weak. It is not the wish for us to go to war. No such general wish exists.

I do not know, Mr. President, who else, if anybody, puts these facts before you with this complete frankness. But I can do no less and do my duty.

No Englishman—except two who were quite intimate friends—has spoken to me about our Government for months, but I detect all the time a tone of pity and grief in their studied courtesy and in their avoidance of the subject. And they talk with every other American in this Kingdom. It is often made unpleasant for Americans in the clubs and in the pursuit of their regular business and occupations; and it is always our inaction about the *Lusitania*. Our controversy with the British Government causes little feeling and that is a sort of echo of the *Lusitania*. They feel that we have not lived up to our promises and professions.

That is the whole story.

Believe me always heartily,

WALTER H. PAGE.

This dismissal of Dumba and of the Attachés has had little more effect on opinion here than the dismissal of the Turkish Ambassador.¹ Sending these was regarded as

¹Rustem Bey, the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, was sent home early in the war, for publishing indiscreet newspaper and magazine articles.

merely kicking the dogs of the man who had stolen our sheep.

VI

One of the reasons why Page felt so intensely about American policy at this time was his conviction that the severance of diplomatic relations, in the latter part of 1915, or the early part of 1916, in itself would have brought the European War to an end. This was a conviction from which he never departed. Count Bernstorff was industriously creating the impression in the United States that his dismissal would immediately cause war between Germany and the United States, and there is little doubt that the Administration accepted this point of view. But Page believed that this was nothing but Prussian bluff. The severance of diplomatic relations at that time, in Page's opinion, would have convinced the Germans of the hopelessness of their cause. In spite of the British blockade, Germany was drawing enormous quantities of food supplies from the United States, and without these supplies she could not maintain indefinitely her resistance. The severance of diplomatic relations would naturally have been accompanied by an embargo suspending trade between the United States and the Fatherland. Moreover, the consideration that was mainly leading Germany to hope for success was the belief that she could embroil the United States and Great Britain over the blockade. A break with Germany would of course mean an end to that manœuvre. Page regarded all Mr. Wilson's attempts to make peace in 1914 and early 1915—before the *Lusitania*—as mistakes, for reasons that have already been set forth. Now, however, he believed that the President had a real opportunity to end the war and the unparalleled suffering which it was caus-

ing. The mere dismissal of Bernstorff, in the Ambassador's opinion, would accomplish this result.

In a communication sent to the President on February 15, 1916, he made this plain.

To the President

February 15, 7 P. M.

The Cabinet has directed the Censor to suppress, as far as he can with prudence, comment which is unfavourable to the United States. He has taken this action because the public feeling against the Administration is constantly increasing. Because the *Lusitania* controversy has been going on so long, and because the Germans are using it in their renewed U-boat campaign, the opinion of this country has reached a point where only prompt action can bring a turn in the tide. Therefore my loyalty to you would not be complete if I should refrain from sending, in the most respectful terms, the solemn conviction which I hold about our opportunity and our duty.

If you immediately refuse to have further parley or to yield one jot or tittle of your original *Lusitania* notes, and if you at once break diplomatic relations with the German Empire, and then declare the most vigorous embargo of the Central Powers, you will quickly end the war. There will be an immediate collapse in German credit. If there are any Allies who are wavering, such action will hold them in line. Certain European neutrals—Sweden, Rumania, Greece, and others—will put up a firm resistance to Germanic influences and certain of them will take part with Great Britain and France. There will be an end at once to the German propaganda, which is now world-wide. The moral weight of our country will be a determining influence and bring an early peace. The credit

you will receive for such a decision will make you immortal and even the people of Germany will be forever grateful.

It is my conviction that we would not be called upon to fire a gun or to lose one human life.

Above all, such an action will settle the whole question of permanent peace. The absolute and grateful loyalty of the whole British Empire, of the British Fleet, and of all the Allied countries will be ours. The great English-speaking nations will be able to control the details of the peace and this without any formal alliance. There will be an incalculable saving of human life and of treasure. Such an act will make it possible for Germany to give in honourably and with good grace because the whole world will be against her. Her bankrupt and blockaded people will bring such pressure to bear that the decision will be hastened.

The sympathies of the American people will be brought in line with the Administration.

If we settle the *Lusitania* question by compromising in any way your original demands, or if we permit it to drag on longer, America can have no part in bringing the war to an end. The current of allied opinion will run so strongly against the Administration that no censorship and no friendly interference by an allied government can stem the distrust of our Government which is now so strong in Europe.

We shall gain by any further delay only a dangerous, thankless, and opulent isolation. The *Lusitania* is the turning point in our history. The time to act is now.

PAGE.

CHAPTER XV

THE AMBASSADOR AND THE LAWYERS

REFERENCES in the foregoing letters show that Page was still having his troubles over the blockade. In the latter part of 1915, indeed, the negotiations with Sir Edward Grey on this subject had reached their second stage. The failure of Washington to force upon Great Britain an entirely new code of naval warfare—the Declaration of London—has already been described. This failure had left both the British Foreign Office and the American State Department in an unsatisfactory frame of mind. The Foreign Office regarded Washington with suspicion, for the American attempt to compel Great Britain to adopt a code of naval warfare which was exceedingly unfavourable to that country and exceedingly favourable to Germany, was susceptible of a sinister interpretation. The British rejection of these overtures, on the other hand, had evidently irritated the international lawyers at Washington. Mr. Lansing now abandoned his efforts to revolutionize maritime warfare and confined himself to specific protests and complaints. His communications to the London Embassy dealt chiefly with particular ships and cargoes. Yet his persistence in regarding all these problems from a strictly legalistic point of view Page regarded as indicating a restricted sense of statesmanship.

To Edward M. House

London, August 4, 1915.

MY DEAR HOUSE:

. . . The lawyer-way in which the Department goes on in its dealings with Great Britain is losing us the only great international friendship that we have any chance of keeping or that is worth having. Whatever real principle we have to uphold with Great Britain—that's all right. I refer only to the continuous series of nagging incidents—always criticism, criticism, criticism of small points—points that we have to yield at last, and never anything constructive. I'll illustrate what I mean by a few incidents that I can recall from memory. If I looked up the record, I should find a very, very much larger list.

(1) We insisted and insisted and insisted, not once but half a dozen times, at the very beginning of the war, on England's adoption of the Declaration of London entire in spite of the fact that Parliament had distinctly declined to adopt it. Of course we had to give in—after we had produced a distinctly unfriendly atmosphere and much feeling.

(2) We denied the British right to put copper on the contraband list—much to their annoyance. Of course we had at last to acquiesce. They were within their rights.

(3) We protested against bringing ships into port to examine them. Of course we had to give in—after producing irritation.

(4) We made a great fuss about stopped telegrams. We have no case at all; but, even after acknowledging that we have no case, every pouch continues to bring telegrams with the request that I ask an explanation why

they were stopped. Such explanations are practically refused. I have 500 telegrams. Periodically I wire the state of the case and ask for more specific instructions. I never get an answer to these requests. But the Department continues to send the telegrams! We confessedly have no case here; and this method can produce nothing but irritation.

I could extend this list to 100 examples—of mere lawyer-like methods—mere useless technicalities and objections which it is obvious in the beginning cannot be maintained. A similar method is now going on about cotton. Now this is not the way Sir Edward Grey takes up business. It's not the way I've done business all my life, nor that you have, nor other frank men who mean what they say and do not say things they do not mean. The constant continuation of this method is throwing away the real regard and confidence of the British Government and of the British public—very fast, too.

I sometimes wish there were not a lawyer in the world. I heard the President say once that it took him twenty years to recover from his legal habit of mind. Well, his Administration is suffering from it to a degree that is pathetic and that will leave bad results for 100 years.

I suspect that in spite of all the fuss we have made we shall at last come to acknowledge the British blockade; for it is pretty nearly parallel to the United States blockade of the South during our Civil War. The only difference is—they can't make the blockade of the Baltic against the traffic from the Scandinavian neutral states effective. That's a good technical objection; but, since practically all the traffic between those States and Germany is in our products, much of the real force of it is lost.

If a protest is made against cotton being made contra-

band—it'll amount to nothing and give only irritation. It will only play into Hoke Smith-German hands and accomplish nothing here. We make as much fuss about points which we have silently to yield later as about a real principle. Hence they all say that the State Department is merely captious, and they pay less and less attention to it and care less and less for American opinion—if only they can continue to get munitions. We are reducing English regard to this purely mercenary basis. . . .

We are—under lawyers' quibbling—drifting apart very rapidly, to our complete isolation from the sympathy of the whole world.

Yours forever sincerely,

W. H. P.

Page refers in this letter to the "blockade"; this was the term which the British Government itself used to describe its restrictive measures against German commerce, and it rapidly passed into common speech. Yet the truth is that Great Britain never declared an actual blockade against Germany. A realization of this fact will clear up much that is obscure in the naval warfare of the next two years. At the beginning of the Civil War, President Lincoln laid an interdict on all the ports of the Confederacy; the ships of all nations were forbidden entering or leaving them: any ship which attempted to evade this restriction, and was captured doing so, was confiscated, with its cargo. That was a blockade, as the term has always been understood. A blockade, it is well to keep in mind, is a procedure which aims at completely closing the blockaded country from all commercial intercourse with the world. A blockading navy, if the blockade is

¹Senator Hoke Smith, of Georgia, was at this time—and afterward—conducting a bitter campaign against the British blockade and advocating an embargo as a retaliation.

successful, or "effective," converts the whole country into a beleaguered fortress, just as an army, surrounding a single town, prevents goods and people from entering or leaving it. Precisely as it is the purpose of a besieging army to starve a particular city or territory into submission, so it is the aim of a blockading fleet to enforce the same treatment on the nation as a whole. It is also essential to keep in mind that the question of contraband has nothing to do with a blockade, for, under this drastic method of making warfare, everything is contraband. Contraband is a term applied to cargoes, such as rifles, machine guns, and the like, which are needed in the prosecution of war.

That a belligerent nation has the right to intercept such munitions on the way to its enemy has been admitted for centuries. Differences of opinion have raged only as to the extent to which this right could be carried—the particular articles, that is, that constituted contraband, and the methods adopted in exercising it. But the important point to be kept in mind is that where there is a blockade, there is no contraband list—for everything automatically becomes contraband. The seizure of contraband on the high seas is a war measure which is availed of only in cases in which the blockade has not been established.

Great Britain, when she declared war on Germany, did not follow President Lincoln's example and lay the whole of the German coast under interdict. Perhaps one reason for this inaction was a desire not unduly to offend neutrals, especially the United States; but the more impelling motive was geographical. The fact is that a blockade of the German seacoast would accomplish little in the way of keeping materials out of Germany. A glance at the map of northwestern Europe will make this fact clear. In the

first place the seacoast of Germany is a small affair. In the North Sea the German coast is a little indentation, not more than two hundred miles long, wedged in between the longer coastlines of Holland and Denmark; in the Baltic it is somewhat more extensive, but the entrances to this sea are so circuitous and treacherous that the suggestion of a blockade here is not a practicable one. The greatest ports of Germany are located on this little North Sea coastline or on its rivers—Hamburg and Bremen. It might therefore be assumed that any nation which successfully blockaded these North Sea ports would have strangled the commerce of Germany. That is far from being the case. The point is that the political boundaries of Germany are simply fictions, when economic considerations are involved. Holland, on the west, and Denmark, on the north, are as much a part of the German transportation system as though these two countries were parts of the German Empire. Their territories and the territories of Germany are contiguous; the railroad and the canal systems of Germany, Holland, and Denmark are practically one. Such ports as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen are just as useful to Germany for purposes of commerce as are Hamburg and Bremen, and, in fact, a special commercial arrangement with Rotterdam has made that city practically a port of Germany since 1868. These considerations show how ineffective would be a blockade of the German coast which did not also comprehend the coast of Holland and Denmark. Germany could still conduct her commerce through these neighbouring countries. And at this point the great difficulty arose. A blockade is an act of war and can be applied only to a country upon which war has been declared. Great Britain had declared war on Germany and could therefore legally close her ports; she had not declared war

on Holland and Denmark, and therefore could not use the same measure against those friendly countries. Consequently the blockade was useless to Great Britain; and so, in the first six months of the war, the Admiralty fell back upon the milder system of declaring certain articles contraband of war and seizing ships that were suspected of carrying them to Germany.

A geographical accident had apparently largely destroyed the usefulness of the British fleet and had guaranteed Germany an unending supply of those foodstuffs without which she could not maintain her resistance for any extended period. Was Great Britain called upon to accept this situation and to deny herself the use of the blockade in this, the greatest struggle in her history? Unless the British fleet could stop cargoes which were really destined to Germany but which were bound for neutral ports, Great Britain could not win the war; if the British fleet could intercept such cargoes, then the chances strongly favoured victory. The experts of the Foreign Office searched the history of blockades and found something which resembled a precedent in the practices of the American Navy during the Civil War. In that conflict Nassau, in the Bahamas, and Matamoros, in Mexico, played a part not unlike that played by Rotterdam and Copenhagen in the recent struggle. These were both neutral ports and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the United States, just as Rotterdam and Copenhagen were outside the jurisdiction of Great Britain. They were the ports of powers with which the United States was at peace, and therefore they could not be blockaded, just as Amsterdam and Copenhagen were ports of powers with which Great Britain was now at peace.

Trade from Great Britain to the Bahamas and Mexico was ostensibly trade from one neutral port to another

neutral port in the same sense as was trade from the United States to Holland and Denmark. Yet the fact is that the "neutrality" of this trade, in the Civil War, from Great Britain to the Bahamas and Mexico, was the most transparent subterfuge; such trade was not "neutral" in the slightest degree. It consisted almost entirely of contraband of war and was intended for the armies of the Confederate States, then in arms against the Federal Government. What is the reason, our Government asked, that these gentle and unwarlike inhabitants of the Bahamas have so suddenly developed such an enormous appetite for percussion caps, rifles, cannon, and other instruments of warfare? The answer, of course, lay upon the surface; the cargoes were intended for reshipment into the Southern States, and they were, in fact, immediately so reshipped. The American Government, which has always regarded realities as more important than logic, brushed aside the consideration that this trade was conducted through neutral ports, unhesitatingly seized these ships and condemned both the ships and their cargoes. Its action was without legal precedent, but our American courts devised a new principle of international law to cover the case—that of "continuous voyage" or "ultimate destination." Under this new doctrine it was maintained that cargoes of contraband could be seized anywhere upon the high seas, even though they were going from one neutral port to another, if it could be demonstrated that this contraband was really on its way to the enemy. The mere fact that it was transshipped at an intermediate neutral port was not important; the important point was the "ultimate destination." British shippers naturally raged over these decisions, but they met with little sympathy from their own government. Great Britain filed no protest against the doctrine of "continuous voyage,"

but recognized its fundamental soundness, and since 1865 this doctrine has been a part of international law.

Great Britain's good sense in acquiescing in our Civil War practices now met its reward; for these decisions of American courts proved a godsend in her hour of trial. The one neutral from which trouble was anticipated was the United States. What better way to meet this situation than to base British maritime warfare upon the decisions of American courts? What more ideal solution of the problem than to make Chief Justice Chase, of the United States Supreme Court, really the author of the British "blockade" against Germany? The policy of the British Foreign Office was to use the sea power of Great Britain to crush the enemy, but to do it in a way that would not alienate American sympathy and American support; clearly the one way in which both these ends could be attained was to frame these war measures upon the pronouncements of American prize courts. In a broad sense this is precisely what Sir Edward Grey now proceeded to do. There was a difference, of course, which Great Britain's enemies in the American Senate—such men as Senator Hoke Smith, of Georgia, and Senator Thomas Walsh, of Montana—proceeded to point out; but it was a difference of degree. Great Britain based her blockade measures upon the American principle of "ultimate destination," but it was necessary considerably to extend that doctrine in order to meet the necessities of the new situation. President Lincoln had applied this principle to absolute contraband, such as powder, shells, rifles, and other munitions of war. Great Britain now proceeded to apply it to that nebulous class of commodities known as "conditional contraband," the chief of which was food-stuffs. If the United States, while a war was pending, could evolve the idea of "ultimate destination" and apply

it to absolute contraband, could not Great Britain, while another war was pending, carry it one degree further and make it include conditional contraband? Thus reasoned the British Foreign Office. To this Mr. Lansing replied that to stop foodstuffs on the way to Germany through a neutral port was simply to blockade a neutral port, and that this was something utterly without precedent. Seizing contraband is not an act of war against the nation whose ships are seized; blockading a port is an act of war; what right therefore had Great Britain to adopt measures against Holland, Denmark, and Sweden which virtually amounted to a blockade?

This is the reason why Great Britain, in the pronouncement of March 1, 1915, and the Order in Council of March 11, 1915, did not describe these measures as a "blockade." President Wilson described his attack on Mexico in 1914 as "measures short of war," and now someone referred to the British restrictions on neutral commerce as "measures short of blockade." The British sought another escape from their predicament by justifying this proceeding, not on the general principles of warfare, but on the ground of reprisal. Germany declared her submarine warfare on merchant ships on February 4, 1915; Great Britain replied with her announcement of March 1st, in which she declared her intention of preventing "commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving Germany." The British advanced this procedure as a retaliation for the illegal warfare which Germany had declared on merchant shipping, both that of the enemy and of neutrals. "The British and French governments will therefore hold themselves free to detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, and origin." This sentence accurately describes the purposes of a blockade—to cut the enemy off from all commercial

relations with the outside world; yet the procedure Great Britain now proposed to follow was not that of a blockade. When this interdict is classically laid, any ship that attempts to run the lines is penalized with confiscation, along with its cargo; but such a penalty was not to be exacted in the present instance. Great Britain now proposed to purchase cargoes of conditional contraband discovered on seized ships and return the ships themselves to their owners, and this soon became the established practice. Not only did the Foreign Office purchase all cotton which was seized on its way to Germany, but it took measures to maintain the price in the markets of the world. In the succeeding months Southern statesmen in both Houses of Congress railed against the British seizure of their great staple, yet the fact was that cotton was all this time steadily advancing in price. When Senator Hoke Smith made a long speech advocating an embargo on the shipment of munitions as a punishment to Great Britain for stopping American cotton on the way to Germany, the acute John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, arose in the Senate and completely annihilated the Georgia politician by demonstrating how the Southern planters were growing rich out of the war.

That the so-called "blockade" situation was a tortuous one must be apparent from this attempt to set forth the salient facts. The basic point was that there could be no blockade of Germany unless the neutral ports of contiguous countries were also blockaded, and Great Britain believed that she had found a precedent for doing this in the operations of the American Navy in the Civil War. But it is obvious that the situation was one which would provide a great feast for the lawyers. That Page sympathized with this British determination to keep food-stuffs out of Germany, his correspondence shows. Day

after day the "protests" from Washington rained upon his desk. The history of our foreign relations for 1915 and 1916 is largely made up of an interminable correspondence dealing with seized cargoes, and the routine of the Embassy was an unending nightmare of "demands," "complaints," "precedents," "cases," "notes," "detentions" of Chicago meats, of Southern cotton, and the like. The American Embassy in London contains hundreds of volumes of correspondence which took place during Page's incumbency; more material has accumulated for those five years than for the preceding century and a quarter of the Government's existence. The greater part of this mass deals with intercepted cargoes.

The following extract from a letter which Page wrote at this time gives a fair idea of the atmosphere that prevailed in London while this correspondence was engaging the Ambassador's mind:

The truth is, in their present depressed mood, the United States is forgotten—everything's forgotten but the one great matter in hand. For the moment at least, the English do not care what we do or what we think or whether we exist—except those critics of things-in-general who use us as a target since they must take a crack at somebody. And I simply cannot describe the curious effect that is produced on men here by the apparent utter lack of understanding in the United States of the phase the war has now entered and of the mood that this phase has brought. I pick up an American paper eight days old and read solemn evidence to show that the British Government is interrupting our trade in order to advance its own at our expense, whereas the truth is that the British Government hasn't given six seconds' thought in six months to anybody's trade—not even its own.

When I am asked to inquire why Pfister and Schmidt's telegram from New York to Schimmelpfenig and Johann in Holland was stopped (the reason is reasonably obvious), I try to picture to myself the British Minister in Washington making inquiry of our Government on the day after Bull Run, why the sailing boat loaded with persimmon blocks to make golf clubs is delayed in Hampton Roads.

I think I have neither heard nor read anything from the United States in three months that didn't seem so remote as to suggest the captain of the sailing ship from Hongkong who turned up at Southampton in February and had not even heard that there was a war. All day long I see and hear women who come to ask if I can make inquiry about their sons and husbands, "dead or missing," with an interval given to a description of a man half of whose body was splashed against a brick wall last night on the Strand when a Zeppelin bomb tore up the street and made projectiles of the pavement; as I walk to and from the Embassy the Park is full of wounded and their nurses; every man I see tells me of a new death; every member of the Government talks about military events or of Balkan venality; the man behind the counter at the cigar store reads me part of a letter just come from his son, telling how he advanced over a pile of dead Germans and one of them grunted and turned under his feet—they (the English alone) are spending \$25,000,000 a day to keep this march going over dead Germans; then comes a telegram predicting blue ruin for American importers and a cheerless Christmas for American children if a cargo of German toys be not quickly released at Rotterdam, and I dimly recall the benevolent unction with which American children last Christmas sent a shipload of toys to this side of the world—many of them for German children—to the tune of "God bless us all"—do you wonder we

often have to pinch ourselves to find out if we are we; and what year of the Lord is it? What is the vital thing—the killing of fifty people last night by a Zeppelin within sight of St. Paul's on one side and of Westminster Abbey on the other, or is it making representations to Sir Edward Grey, who has hardly slept for a week because his despatches from Sofia, Athens, Belgrade, and Salonika come at all hours, each possibly reporting on which side a new government may throw its army—to decide perhaps the fate of the canal leading to Asia, the vast British Asiatic empire at stake—is it making representations to Sir Edward while his mind is thus occupied, that it is of the greatest importance to the United States Government that a particular German who is somewhere in this Kingdom shall be permitted to go to the United States because he knows how to dye sealskins and our sealskins are yet undyed and the winter is coming? There will be no new sealskins here, for every man and woman must give half his income to keep the cigarman's son marching over dead Germans, some of whom grunt and turn under his feet. Dumba is at Falmouth to-day and gets just two lines in the newspapers. Nothing and nobody gets three lines unless he or it in some way furthers the war. Every morning the Washington despatches say that Mr. Lansing is about to send a long note to England. England won't read it till there comes a lull in the fighting or in the breathless diplomatic struggle with the Balkans. London and the Government are now in much the same mood that Washington and Lincoln's administration were in after Lee had crossed the Potomac on his way to Gettysburg. Northcliffe, the Lord of Yellow Journals, but an uncommonly brilliant fellow, has taken to his bed from sheer nervous worry. "The revelations that are imminent," says he, "will shake the world—the incom-

petence of the Government, the losses along the Dardanelles, the throwing away of British chances in the Balkans, perhaps the actual defeat of the Allies." I regard Lord Northcliffe less as an entity than as a symptom. But he is always very friendly to us and he knows the United States better than any Englishman that I know except Bryce. He and Bryce are both much concerned about our Note's coming just "at this most distressing time." "If it come when we are calmer, no matter; but now it cannot receive attention and many will feel that the United States has hit on a most unhappy moment—almost a cruel moment—to remind us of our sins."—That's the substance of what they say.

Overwork, or perhaps mainly the indescribable strain on the nerves and vitality of men, caused by this experience, for which in fact men are not built, puts one of our staff after another in bed. None has been seriously sick: the malady takes some form of "grip." On the whole we've been pretty lucky in spite of this almost regular temporary breakdown of one man after another. I've so far escaped. But I am grieved to hear that Whitlock is abed—"no physical ailment whatever—just worn out," his doctor says. I have tried to induce him and his wife to come here and make me a visit; but one characteristic of this war-malady is the conviction of the victim that he is somehow necessary to hold the world together. About twice a week I get to the golf links and take the risk of the world's falling apart and thus escape both illness and its illusions.

"I cannot begin to express my deep anxiety and even uneasiness about the relations of these two great governments and peoples," Page wrote about this time. "The friendship of the United States and Great Britain

is all that now holds the world together. It is the greatest asset of civilization left. All the cargoes of copper and oil in the world are not worth as much to the world. Yet when a shipper's cargo is held up he does not think of civilization and of the future of mankind and of free government; he thinks only of his cargo and of the indignity that he imagines has been done him; and what is the American Government for if not to protect his rights? Of course he's right; but there must be somebody somewhere who sees things in their right proportion. The man with an injury rushes to the Department of State—quite properly. He is in a mood to bring England to book. Now comes the critical stage in the journey of his complaint. The State Department hurries it on to me—very properly; every man's right must be guarded and defended—a right to get his cargo to market, a right to get on a steamer at Queenstown, a right to have his censored telegram returned, any kind of a right, if he have a right. Then the Department, not wittingly, I know, but humanly, almost inevitably, in the great rush of overwork, sends his 'demands' to me, catching much of his tone and apparently insisting on the removal of his grievance as a right, without knowing all the facts in the case. The telegrams that come to me are full of 'protests' and 'demands'—protest and demand this, protest and demand that. A man from Mars who should read my book of telegrams received during the last two months would find it difficult to explain how the two governments have kept at peace. It is this serious treatment of trifling grievances which makes us feel here that the exactions and dislocations and necessary disturbances of this war are not understood at home.

"I assure you (and there are plenty of facts to prove it) that this Government (both for unselfish and selfish rea-

sons) puts a higher value on our friendship than on any similar thing in the world. They will go—they are going—the full length to keep it. But, in proportion to our tendency to nag them about little things will the value set on our friendship diminish and will their confidence in our sincerity decline.”

The note which Lord Bryce and Lord Northcliffe so dreaded reached the London Embassy in October, 1915. The State Department had spent nearly six months in preparing it; it was the American answer to the so-called blockade established by the Order in Council of the preceding March. Evidently its contents fulfilled the worst forebodings:

To Edward M. House

London, November 12, 1915.

DEAR HOUSE:

I have a great respect for the British Navy. Admiral Jellicoe now has under his command 3,000 ships of all sorts—far and away the biggest fleet, I think, that was ever assembled. For the first time since the ocean was poured out, one navy practically commands all the seas: nothing sails except by its grace. It is this fleet of course that will win the war. The beginning of the end—however far off yet the end may be—is already visible by reason of the economic pressure on Germany. But for this fleet, by the way, London would be in ruins, all its treasure looted; every French seacoast city and the Italian peninsula would be as Belgium and Poland are; and thousands of English women would be violated—just as dead French girls are found in many German trenches that have been taken in France. Hence I greatly respect the British fleet.

We have a good navy, too, for its size, and a naval personnel as good as any afloat. I hear—with much joy—that we are going to make our navy bigger—as much bigger (God save the mark!) as Bryan will permit.

Now, whatever the future bring, since any fighting enterprise that may ever be thrust on us will be just and justified, we must see to it that we win, as doubtless we shall and as hitherto we always have won. We must be dead sure of winning. Well, whatever fight may be thrust on us by anybody, anywhere, at any time, for any reason—if it only be generally understood beforehand that our fleet and the British fleet shoot the same language, there'll be no fight thrust upon us. The biggest bully in the world wouldn't dare kick the sorriest dog we have.

Here, therefore, is a Peace Programme for you—the only basis for a permanent peace in the world. There's no further good in having venerable children build houses of sand at The Hague; there's no further good in peace organizations or protective leagues to enforce peace. We had as well get down to facts. So far as ensuring peace is concerned the biggest fact in the world is the British fleet. The next biggest fact is the American fleet, because of itself and still more because of the vast reserve power of the United States which it implies. If these two fleets perfectly understand one another about the undesirability of wars of aggression, there'll be no more big wars as long as this understanding continues. Such an understanding calls for no treaty—it calls only for courtesy.

And there is no other peace-basis worth talking about—by men who know how the world is governed.

Since I have lived here I have spent my days and nights, my poor brain, and my small fortune all most freely and gladly to get some understanding of the men who rule this Kingdom, and of the women and the customs and

the traditions that rule these men—to get their trick of thought, the play of their ideals, the working of their imagination, the springs of their instincts. It is impossible for any man to know just how well he himself does such a difficult task—how accurately he is coming to understand the sources and character of a people's actions. Yet, at the worst, I do know something about the British: I know enough to make very sure of the soundness of my conclusion that they are necessary to us and we to them. Else God would have permitted the world to be peopled in some other way. And when we see that the world will be saved by such an artificial combination as England and Russia and France and Japan and Serbia, it calls for no great wisdom to see the natural way whereby it must be saved in the future.

For this reason every day that I have lived here it has been my conscious aim to do what I could to bring about a condition that shall make sure of this—that, whenever we may have need of the British fleet to protect our shores or to prevent an aggressive war anywhere, it shall be ours by a natural impulse and necessity—even without the asking.

I have found out that the first step toward that end is courtesy; that the second step is courtesy, and the third step—such a fine and high courtesy (which includes courage) as the President showed in the Panama tolls controversy. We have—we and the British—common aims and character. Only a continuous and sincere courtesy—over periods of strain as well as of calm—is necessary for as complete an understanding as will be required for the automatic guidance of the world in peaceful ways.

Now, a difference is come between us—the sort of difference that handled as between friends would serve only to bind us together with a sturdier respect. We

send a long lawyer's Note, not discourteous but wholly uncourteous, which is far worse. I am writing now only of the manner of the Note, not of its matter. There is not a courteous word, nor a friendly phrase, nor a kindly turn in it, not an allusion even to an old acquaintance, to say nothing of an old friendship, not a word of thanks for courtesies or favours done us, not a hint of sympathy in the difficulties of the time. There is nothing in its tone to show that it came from an American to an Englishman: it might have been from a Hottentot to a Fiji-Islander.

I am almost sure—I'll say quite sure—that this uncourteous manner is far more important than its endless matter. It has greatly hurt our friends, the real men of the Kingdom. It has made the masses angry—which is of far less importance than the severe sorrow that our discourtesy of manner has brought to our friends—I fear to all considerate and thoughtful Englishmen.

Let me illustrate: When the Panama tolls controversy arose, Taft ceased to speak the language of the natural man and lapsed into lawyer's courthouse zigzagging mutterings. Knox wrote a letter to the British Government that would have made an enemy of the most affectionate twin brother—all mere legal twists and turns, as agreeable as a pocketful of screws. Then various bovine "international lawyers" wrote books about it. I read them and became more and more confused the further I went: you always do. It took me some time to recover from this word-drunk debauch and to find my own natural intelligence again, the common sense that I was born with. Then I saw that the whole thing went wrong from the place where that Knox legal note came in. Congressmen in the backwoods quoted cryptic passages from it, thought they were saying something, and proceeded to make their audiences believe that somehow England had hit us with

a club—or would have hit us but for Knox. That pure discourtesy kept us apart from English sympathy for something like two years.

Then the President took it up. He threw the legal twaddle into the gutter. He put the whole question in a ten-minutes' speech to Congress, full of clearness and fairness and high courtesy. It won even the rural Congressmen. It was read in every capital and the men who conduct every government looked up and said, "This is a real man, a brave man, a just man." You will recall what Sir Edward Grey said to me: "The President has taught us all a lesson and set us all a high example in the noblest courtesy."

This one act brought these two nations closer together than they had ever been since we became an independent nation. It was an act of courtesy. . . .

My dear House, suppose the postman some morning were to leave at your door a thing of thirty-five heads and three appendices, and you discovered that it came from an old friend whom you had long known and greatly valued—this vast mass of legal stuff, without a word or a turn of courtesy in it—what would you do? He had a grievance, your old friend had. Friends often have. But instead of explaining it to you, he had gone and had his lawyers send this many-headed, much-appendiced ton of stuff. It wasn't by that method that you found your way from Austin, Texas, to your present eminence and wisdom. Nor was that the way our friend found his way from a little law-office in Atlanta, where I first saw him, to the White House.

More and more I am struck with this—that governments are human. They are not remote abstractions, nor impersonal institutions. Men conduct them; and they do not cease to be men. A man is made up of six

parts of human nature and four parts of facts and other things—a little reason, some prejudice, much provincialism, and of the particular fur or skin that suits his habitat. When you wish to win a man to do what *you* want him to do, you take along a few well-established facts, some reasoning and such-like, but you take along also three or four or five parts of human nature—kindliness, courtesy, and such things—sympathy and a human touch.

If a man be six parts human and four parts of other things, a government, especially a democracy, is seven, or eight, or nine parts human nature. It's the most human thing I know. The best way to manage governments and nations—so long as they are disposed to be friendly—is the way we manage one another. I have a confirmation of this in the following comment which came to me to-day. It was made by a friendly member of Parliament.

“The President himself dealt with Germany. Even in his severity he paid the Germans the compliment of a most courteous tone in his Note. But in dealing with us he seems to have called in the lawyers of German importers and Chicago pork-packers. I miss the high Presidential courtesy that we had come to expect from Mr. Wilson.”

An American banker here has told me of the experience of an American financial salesman in the city the day after our Note was published. His business is to make calls on bankers and other financial men, to sell them securities. He is a man of good address who is popular with his clients. The first man he called on, on that day, said: “I don't wish to be offensive to you. But I have only one way to show my feeling of indignation toward the United States, and that is, to have nothing more to do with Americans.”

The next man said: "No, nothing to-day, I thank you. No—nor to-morrow either; nor the next day. Good morning."

After four or five such greetings, the fellow gave it up and is now doing nothing.

I don't attach much importance to such an incident as this, except as it gives a hint of the general feeling. These financial men probably haven't even read our Note. Few people have. But they have all read the short and sharp newspaper summary which preceded it in the English papers. But what such an incident does indicate is the prevalence of a state of public feeling which would prevent the Government from yielding any of our demands even if the Government so wished. It has now been nearly a week since the Note was published. I have seen most of the neutral ministers. Before the Note came they expressed great eagerness to see it: it would champion their cause. Since it came not one of them has mentioned it to me. The Secretary of one of them remarked, after being invited to express himself: "It is too—too—long!" And, although I have seen most of the Cabinet this week, not a man mentioned it to me. People seem studiously to avoid it, lest they give offense.

I have, however, got one little satisfaction. An American—a half-expatriated loafer who talks "art"—you know the intellectually affected and degenerate type—screwed his courage up and told me that he felt ashamed of his country. I remarked that I felt sure the feeling was mutual. That, I confess, made me feel better.

As nearly as I can make out, the highwater mark of English good-feeling toward us in all our history was after the President's Panama tolls courtesy. The low-water mark, since the Civil War, I am sure, is now. The Cleveland Venezuela message came at a time of no nervous

strain and did, I think, produce no long-lasting effect. A part of the present feeling is due to the English conviction that we have been taken in by the Germans in the submarine controversy, but a large part is due to the lack of courtesy in this last Note—the manner in which it was written even more than its matter. As regards its matter, I have often been over what I conceive to be the main points with Sir Edward Grey—very frankly and without the least offense. He has said: “We may have to arbitrate these things,” as he might say, “We had better take a cab because it is raining.” It is easily possible—or it was—to discuss anything with this Government without offense. I have, in fact, stood up before Sir Edward’s fire and accused him of stealing a large part of the earth’s surface, and we were just as good friends afterward as before. But I never drew a lawyer’s indictment of him as a land-thief: that’s different.

I suppose no two peoples or governments ever quite understand one another. Perhaps they never will. That is too much to hope for. But when one government writes to another it ought to write (as men do) with some reference to the personality of the other and to their previous relations, since governments are more human than men. Of course I don’t know who wrote the Note. Hence I can talk about it freely to you without implying criticism of anybody in particular. But the man who wrote it never saw the British Government and wouldn’t know it if he met it in the road. To him it is a mere legal entity, a wicked, impersonal institution against which he has the task of drawing an indictment—not the task of trying to persuade it to confess the propriety of a certain course of conduct. In his view, it is a wicked enemy to start with—like the Louisiana lottery of a previous generation or the Standard Oil Company of our time.

One would have thought, since we were six months in preparing it, that a draft of the Note would have been sent to the man on the ground whom our Government keeps in London to study the situation at first hand and to make the best judgment he can about the most effective methods of approach on delicate and difficult matters. If that had been done, I should have suggested a courteous short Note saying that we are obliged to set forth such and such views about marine law and the rights of neutrals, to His Majesty's Government; and that the contention of the United States Government was herewith sent—etc., etc.—Then this identical Note (with certain court-house, strong, shirt-sleeve adjectives left out) could have come without arousing any feeling whatsoever. Of course I have no personal vanity in saying this to you. I am sure I outgrew that foible many years ago. But such a use of an ambassador—of any ambassador—is obviously one of the best and most natural uses he could be put to; and all governments but ours do put their ambassadors to such a use: that's what they have 'em for.

Per contra: a telegram has just come in saying that a certain Lichtenstein in New York had a lot of goods stopped by the British Government, which (by an arrangement made with their attorney here) agreed to buy them at a certain price: will I go and find out why the Government hasn't yet paid Lichtenstein and when he may expect his money? Is it an ambassadorial duty to collect a private bill for Lichtenstein, in a bargain with which our Government has had nothing to do? I have telegraphed the Department, quite calmly, that I don't think it is. I venture to say no ambassador ever had such a request as that before from his Government.

My dear House, I often wonder if my years of work here—the kind of high good work I've tried to do—have

not been thrown away. I've tried to take and to busy myself with a long-range view of great subjects. The British Empire and the United States will be here long after we are dead, and their relations will continue to be one of the most important matters—perhaps the most important matter—in the world. Well, now think of Lichtenstein's bill!

To get back where I started—I fear, therefore, that, when I next meet the Admiral of the Grand Fleet (with whom I used to discuss everything quite freely before he sailed away to the war), he may forget to mention that we may have his 3,000 ships at our need.

Since this present difference is in danger of losing the healing influence of a kindly touch—has become an uncourteous monster of 35 heads and 3 appendices—I see no early end of it. The British Foreign Office has a lot of lawyers in its great back offices. They and our lawyers will now butt and rebut as long as a goat of them is left alive on either side. The two governments—the two human, kindly groups—have retired: they don't touch, on this matter, now. The lawyers will have the time of their lives, each smelling the blood of the other.

If more notes must come—as the English papers report over and over again every morning and every afternoon—the President might do much by writing a brief, human document to accompany the Appendices. If it be done courteously, we can accuse them of stealing sheep and of dyeing the skins to conceal the theft—without provoking the slightest bad feeling; and, in the end, they'll pay another *Alabama* award without complaint and frame the check and show it to future ambassadors as Sir Edward shows the *Alabama* check to me sometimes.

And it'll be a lasting shame (and may bring other Great Wars) if lawyers are now permitted to tear the garments

with which Peace ought to be clothed as soon as she can escape from her present rags and tatters.

Yours always heartily,

W. H. P.

P. S. My dear House: Since I have—in weeks and months past—both telegraphed and written the Department (and I presume the President has seen what I've sent) about the feeling here, I've written this letter to you and not to the President nor Lansing. I will not run the risk of seeming to complain—nor even of seeming to seem to complain. But if you think it wise to send or show this letter to the President, I'm willing you should. This job was botched: there's no doubt about that. We shall not recover for many a long, long year. The identical indictment could have been drawn with admirable temper and the way laid down for arbitration and for keeping our interpretation of the law and precedents intact—all done in a way that would have given no offense.

The feeling runs higher and higher every day—goes deeper and spreads wider.

Now on top of it comes the *Ancona*.¹ The English press, practically unanimously, makes sneering remarks about our Government. After six months it has got no results from the *Lusitania* controversy, which Bernstorff is allowed to prolong in secret session while factories are blown up, ships supplied with bombs, and all manner of outrages go on (by Germans) in the United States. The English simply can't understand why Bernstorff is allowed to stay. They predict that nothing will come of the *Ancona* case, nor of any other case. Nobody wants us to get into the war—nobody who counts—but they are

¹Torpedoed off Sardinia on Nov. 7, 1915, by the Austrians. There was a large loss of life, including many Americans.

losing respect for us because we seem to them to submit to anything.

We've simply dropped out. No English person ever mentions our Government to me. But they talk to one another all the time about the political anæmia of the United States Government. They think that Bernstorff has the State Department afraid of him and that the Pacifists dominate opinion—the Pacifists-at-any-price. I no longer even have a chance to explain any of these things to anybody I know.

It isn't the old question we used to discuss of our having no friend in the world when the war ends. It's gone far further than that. It is now whether the United States Government need be respected by anybody.

W. H. P.

CHAPTER XVI

DARK DAYS FOR THE ALLIES

To Edward M. House

June 30, 1915.

MY DEAR HOUSE:

There's a distinct wave of depression here—perhaps I'd better say a period of setbacks has come. So far as we can find out only the Germans are doing anything in the war on land. The position in France is essentially the same as it was in November, only the Germans are much more strongly entrenched. Their great plenty of machine guns enables them to use fewer men and to kill more than the Allies. The Russians also lack ammunition and are yielding more and more territory. The Allies—so you hear now—will do well if they get their little army away from the Dardanelles before the German-Turks eat 'em alive, and no Balkan state comes in to help the Allies. Italy makes progress—slowly, of course, over almost impassable mountains—etc., etc. Most of this doleful recital I think is true; and I find more and more men here who have lost hope of seeing an end of the war in less than two or three years, and more and more who fear that the Germans will never be forced out of Belgium. And the era of the giant aeroplane seems about to come—a machine that can carry several tons and several men and go great distances—two engines, two propellers, and the like. It isn't at all impossible, I am told, that these machines may be the things that will at last end the war—possibly, but I doubt it.

At any rate, it is true that a great wave of discouragement is come. All these events and more seem to prove to my mind the rather dismal failure the Liberal Government made—a failure really to grasp the problem. It was a dead failure. Of course they are waking up now, when they are faced with a certain dread lest many soldiers prefer frankly to die rather than spend another winter in practically the same trenches. You hear rumours, too, of great impending military scandals—God knows whether there be any truth in them or not.

In a word, while no Englishman gives up or will ever give up—that's all rot—the job he has in hand is not going well. He's got to spit on his hands and buckle up his belt two holes tighter yet. And I haven't seen a man for a month who dares hope for an end of the fight within any time that he can foresee.

I had a talk to-day with the Russian Ambassador.¹ He wished to know how matters stood between the United States and Great Britain. I said to him: "I'll give you a task if you have leisure. Set to and help me hurry up your distinguished Ally in dealing with our shipping troubles."

The old man laughed—that seemed a huge joke to him; he threw up his hands and exclaimed—"My God! He is slow about his own business—has always been slow—can't be anything else."

After more such banter, the nigger in his wood-pile poked his head out: "Is there any danger," he asked, "that munitions may be stopped?"

The Germans have been preparing northern France for German occupation. No French are left there, of course, except women and children and old men. They must be fed or starved or deported. The Germans put them on

¹ Count Beckendorff.

trains—a whole village at a time—and run them to the Swiss frontier. Of course the Swiss pass them on into France. The French have their own and—the Germans will have northern France without any French population, if this process goes on long enough.

The mere bang! bang! frightful era of the war is passed. The Germans are settling down to permanent business with their great organizing machine. Of course they talk about the freedom of the seas and such mush-mush; of course they'd like to have Paris and rob it of enough money to pay what the war has cost them, and London, too. But what they really want for keeps is seacoast—Belgium and as much of the French coast as they can win. That's really what they are out gunning for. Of course, somehow at some time they mean to get Holland, too, and Denmark, if they really need it. Then they'll have a very respectable seacoast—the thing that they chiefly lack now.

More and more people are getting their nerves knocked out. I went to a big hospital on Sunday, twenty-five miles out of London. They showed me an enormous, muscular Tommy sitting by himself in a chair under the trees. He had had a slight wound which quickly got well. But his speech was gone. That came back, too, later. But then he wouldn't talk and he'd insist on going off by himself. He's just knocked out—you can't find out just how much gumption he has left. That's what the war did for him: it stupefied him. Well, it's stupefied lots of folks who have never seen a trench. That's what's happened. Of all the men who started in with the game, I verily believe that Lloyd George is holding up best. He organized British finance. Now he's organizing British industry.

It's got hot in London—hotter than I've ever known

it. It gets lonelier (more people going away) and sadder—more wounded coming back and more visible sorrow. We seem to be settling down to something that is more or less like Paris—so far less, but it may become more and more like it. And the confident note of an earlier period is accompanied by a dull undertone of much less cheerfulness. The end is—in the lap of the gods.

W. H. P.

To Arthur W. Page

American Embassy, London,
July 25, 1915.

DEAR ARTHUR:

. . . Many men here are very active in their thought about the future relations of the United States and Great Britain. Will the war bring or leave them closer together? If the German machine be completely smashed (and it may not be completely smashed) the Japanese danger will remain. I do not know how to estimate that danger accurately. But there is such a danger. And, if the German wild beast ever come to life again, there's an eternal chance of trouble with it. For defensive purposes it may become of the very first importance that the whole English-speaking world should stand together—not in entangling alliance, but with a much clearer understanding than we have ever yet had. I'll indicate to you some of my cogitations on this subject by trying to repeat what I told Philip Kerr¹ a fortnight ago—one Sunday in the country. I can write this to you without seeming to parade my own opinions.—Kerr is one of "The Round Table," perhaps the best group of men here for the real study and free discussion of large political subjects. Their quarterly, *The Round*

¹Afterward private secretary to Premier Lloyd George.

Table, is the best review, I dare say, in the world. Kerr is red hot for a close and perfect understanding between Great Britain and the United States. I told him that, since Great Britain had only about forty per cent. of the white English-speaking people and the United States had about sixty per cent., I hoped in his natural history that the tail didn't wag the dog. I went on:

"You now have the advantage of us in your aggregation of three centuries of accumulated wealth—the spoil of all the world—and in the talent that you have developed for conserving it and adding to it and in the institutions you have built up to perpetuate it—your merchant ships, your insurance, your world-wide banking, your mortgages on all new lands; but isn't this the only advantage you have? This advantage will pass. You are now shooting away millions and millions, and you will have a debt that is bound to burden industry. On our side, we have a more recently mixed race than yours; you've begun to inbreed. We have also (and therefore) more adaptability, a greater keenness of mind in our masses; we are Old-World men set free—free of classes and traditions and all that they connote. Your so-called democracy is far behind ours. Your aristocracy and your privileges necessarily bring a social and economic burden. Half your people look backward.

"Your leadership rests on your wealth and on the power that you've built on your wealth."

When he asked me how we were to come closer together—"closer together, with your old-time distrust of us and with your remoteness?"—I stopped him at "remoteness."

"That's the reason," I said. "Your idea of our 'remoteness.' 'Remoteness' from what? From you? Are you not betraying the only real difficulty of a closer sym-

pathy by assuming that you are the centre of the world? When you bring yourself to think of the British Empire as a part of the American Union—mind you, I am not saying that you would be formally admitted—but when you are yourselves in close enough sympathy with us to wish to be admitted, the chief difficulty of a real union of thought will be gone. You recall Lord Rosebery's speech in which he pictured the capital of the British Empire being moved to Washington if the American Colonies had been retained under the Crown? Well, it was the Crown that was the trouble, and the capital of English-speaking folk has been so moved and you still remain 'remote.' Drop 'remote' from your vocabulary and your thought and we'll actually be closer together."

It's an enormous problem—just how to bring these countries closer together. Perhaps nothing can do it but some great common danger or some great common adventure. But this is one of the problems of your lifetime. England can't get itself clean loose from the continent nor from continental mediævalism; and with that we can have nothing to do. Men like Kerr think that somehow a great push toward democracy here will be given by the war. I don't quite see how. So far the aristocracy have made perhaps the best showing in defense of English liberty. They are paying the bills of the war; they have sent their sons; these sons have died like men; and their parents never whimper. It's a fine breed for such great uses as these. There was a fine incident in the House of Lords the other day, which gave the lie to the talk that one used to hear here about "degeneracy." Somebody made a perfectly innocent proposal to complete a list of peers and peers' sons who had fallen in the war—a thing that will, of course, be done,

just as a similar list will be compiled of the House of Commons, of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. But one peer after another objected vigorously lest such a list appear immodest. "We are but doing our duty. Let the matter rest there."

In a time like this the aristocracy proves its worth. In fact, all aristocracies grew chiefly out of wars, and perhaps they are better for wars than a real democracy. Here, you see, you run into one of those contradictions in life and history which make the world so hard to change. . . .

You know there are some reasons why peace, whenever it may come, will bring problems as bad as the problems of the war itself. I can think of no worse task than the long conferences of the Allies with their conflicting interests and ambitions. Then must come ~~their~~ conferences with the enemy. Then there are sure to be other conferences to try to make peace secure. And, of course, many are going to be dissatisfied and disappointed, and perhaps out of these disappointments other wars may come. The world will not take up its knitting and sit quietly by the fire for many a year to come. . . .

Affectionately,

W. H. P.

One happiness came to Mr. and Mrs. Page in the midst of all these war alarums. On August 4, 1915, their only daughter, Katharine, was married to Mr. Charles G. Loring, of Boston, Massachusetts. The occasion gave the King an opportunity of showing the high regard in which Page and his family were held. It had been planned that the wedding should take place in Westminster Abbey, but the King very courteously offered Miss Page the Royal chapel in St. James's Palace. This was a distinguished compliment, as it was the first time that any

marriage, in which both bride and bridegroom were foreigners, had ever been celebrated in this building, which for centuries has been the scene of royal weddings. The special place which his daughter had always held in the Ambassador's affections is apparent in the many letters that now followed her to her new home in the United States. The unique use Page made of the initials of his daughter's name was characteristic.

To Mrs. Charles G. Loring

London, September 1, 1915.

MY DEAR K. A. P-TAIN:

Here's a joke on your mother and Frank: We three (and Smith) went up to Broadway in the car, to stay there a little while and then to go on into Wales, etc. The hotel is an old curiosity shop; you sit on Elizabethan chairs by a Queen Anne table, on a drunken floor, and look at the pewter platters on the wall or do your best to look at them, for the ancient windows admit hardly any light. "Oh! lovely," cries Frank; and then he and your mother make out in the half-darkness a perfectly wonderful copper mug on the mantelpiece; and you go out and come in the ramshackle door (stooping every time) after you've felt all about for the rusty old iron latch, and then you step down two steps (or fall), presently to step up two more. Well, for dinner we had six kinds of meat and two meat pies and potatoes and currants! My dinner was a potato. I'm old and infirm and I have many ailments, but I'm not so bad off as to be able to live on a potato a day. And since we were having a vacation, I didn't see the point. So I came home where I have seven courses for dinner, all good; and Mrs. Leggett took my place in the car. That carnivorous company

went on. They've got to eat six kinds of meat and two meat pies and—currants! I haven't. Your mother calls me up on the phone every morning—me, who am living here in luxury, seven courses at every dinner—and asks anxiously, "And how *are* you, dear?" I answer: "Prime, and how *are you?*" We are all enjoying ourselves, you see, and I don't have to eat six kinds of meat and two meat pies and—currants! They do; and may Heaven save 'em and get 'em home safe!

It's lovely in London now—fine, shining days and showers at night and Ranelagh beautiful, and few people here; but I don't deny its loneliness—somewhat. Yet sleep is good, and easy and long. I have neither an ocean voyage nor six kinds of meat and two meat pies and currants. I congratulate myself and write to you and mother.

You'll land to-morrow or next day—good; I congratulate you. Salute the good land for me and present my respectful compliments to vegetables that have taste and fruit that is not sour—to the sunshine, in fact, and to everything that ripens and sweetens in its glow.

And you're now (when this reaches you) fixing up your home—your *own* home, dear Kitty. Bless your dear life, you left a home here—wasn't it a good and nice one?—left it very lonely for the man who has loved you twenty-four years and been made happy by your presence. But he'll love you twenty-five more and on and on—always. So you haven't lost that—nor can you. And it's very fit and right that you should build your own nest; that adds another happy home, you see. And I'm very sure it will be very happy always. Whatever I can do to make it so, now or ever, you have only to say. But—your mother took your photograph with her and got it out of the bag and put it on the bureau as soon as she

went to her room—a photograph taken when you were a little girl.

Hodson¹ came up to see me to-day and with tears of gratitude in his voice told me of the present that you and Chud had made him. He is very genuinely pleased. As for the rest, life goes on as usual.

I laugh as I think of all your new aunts and cousins looking you over and wondering if you'll fit, and then saying to one another as they go to bed: "She is lovely— isn't she?" I could tell 'em a thing or two if I had a whack at 'em.

And you'll soon have all your pretty things in place in your pretty home, and a lot more that I haven't seen. I'll see 'em all before many years—and you, too! Tell me, did Chud get you a dinner book? Keep your record of things: you'll enjoy it in later years. And you'll have a nice time this autumn—your new kinsfolk, your new friends and old and Boston and Cambridge. If you run across Mr. Mifflin, William Roscoe Thayer, James Ford Rhodes, President Eliot—these are my particular old friends whose names occur at the moment.

My love to you and Chud too,

Affectionately,

W. H. P.

The task of being "German Ambassador to Great Britain" was evidently not without its irritations.

To Arthur W. Page

September 15, 1915.

DEAR ARTHUR:

Yesterday was my German day. When the boy came up to my room, I told him I had some official calls to make.

¹A messenger in the American Embassy.

"Therefore get out my oldest and worst suit." He looked much confused; and when I got up both my worst and best suits were laid out. Evidently he thought he must have misunderstood me. I asked your mother if she was ready to go down to breakfast. "Yes."—"Well, then I'll leave you." She grunted something and when we both got down she asked: "What *did* you say to me upstairs?" I replied: "I regard the incident as closed." She looked a sort of pitying look at me and a minute or two later asked: "What on earth is the matter with you? Can't you hear at all?" I replied: "No. Therefore let's talk." She gave it up, but looked at me again to make sure I was all there.

I stopped at the barber shop, badly needing a shave. The barber got his brush and razor ready. I said: "Cut my hair." He didn't talk for a few minutes, evidently engaged in deep thought.

When I got to my office, a case was brought to me of a runaway American who was caught trying to send news to Germany. "Very good," said I, "now let it be made evident that it shall appear therefore that his innocence having been duly established he shall be shot."

"What, sir?"

"That since it must be evident that his guilt is genuine therefore see that he be acquitted and then shot."

Laughlin and Bell and Stabler were seen in an earnest conference in the next room for nearly half an hour.

Shoecraft brought me a letter. "This is the most courteous complaint about the French passport bureau we have yet had. I thought you'd like to see this lady's letter. She says she knows you."

"Do not answer it, then."

He went off and conferred with the others.

Hodson spoke of the dog he sold to Frank. "Yes,"

said I, "since he was a very nice dog, therefore he was worthless."

"Sir?"

And he went off after looking back at me in a queer way.

The day went on in that fashion. When I came out to go to lunch, the stairs down led upward and I found myself, therefore, stepping out of the roof on to the sidewalk—the house upside down. Smith looked puzzled. "Home, sir?"

"No. Go the other way." After he had driven two or three blocks, I told him to turn again and go the other way—home!

Your mother said almost as soon as I got into the door—"What *was* the matter with you this morning?"

"Oh, nothing. You forget that I am the German Ambassador."

Now this whole narrative is a lie. Nothing in it occurred. If it were otherwise it wouldn't be German.

Affectionately,

W. H. P.

To Mrs. Charles G. Loring

London, 6 Grosvenor Square.

Sunday, September 19, 1915.

MY DEAR KITTY:

You never had a finer autumnal day in the land of the free than this day has been in this old kingdom—fresh and fair; and so your mother said to herself and me: "Let's go out to the Laughlins' to lunch," and we went. There never was a prettier drive. We found out among other things that you pleased Mrs. Laughlin very much by your letter. Her garden changes every week or so, and it never was lovelier than it is now.—Then we came back home and dined alone. Well, since we can't have

you and Chud and Frank, I don't care if we do dine alone sometimes for some time to come. Your mother's monstrous good company, and sometimes three is a crowd. And now is a good time to be alone. London never was so dull or deserted since I've known it, nor ever so depressed. The military (land) operations are not cheerful; the hospitals are all full; I see more wounded soldiers by far than at any previous time; the Zeppelins came somewhere to this island every night for a week—one of them, on the night of the big raid, was visible from our square for fifteen or twenty minutes—in general it is a dull and depressing time. I have thought that since you were determined to run off with a young fellow, you chose a pretty good time to go away. I'm afraid there'll be no more of what we call "fun" in this town as long as we stay here.

Worse yet: in spite of the Coalition Government and everybody's wish to get on smoothly and to do nothing but to push the war, since Parliament convened there's been a great row, which doesn't get less. The labour men give trouble; people blame the politicians: Lloyd George is saving the country, say some; Lloyd George ought to be hanged, say others. Down with Northcliffe! They seem likely to burn him at the stake—except those who contend that he has saved the nation. Some maintain that the cabinet is too big—twenty-two. More say that it has no leadership. If you favour conscription, you are a traitor: if you don't favour it, you are pro-German. It's the same sort of old quarrel they had before the war, only it is about more subjects. In fact, nobody seems very clearly to know what it's about. Meantime the Government is spending money at a rate that nobody ever dreamed of before. Three million pounds a day—some days five million. The Germans

meantime are taking Russia; the Allies are not taking the Dardanelles; in France the old deadlock continues. Boston at its worst must be far more cheerful than this.

Affectionately and with my love to Chud,

W. H. P.

To the President

London, September 26, 1915.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

The suppression of facts about the military situation is more rigorous than ever since the military facts have become so discouraging. The volume of pretty well authenticated news that I used to hear privately has become sensibly diminished. Rumours that reach me by the back door, in all sorts of indirect ways, are not fewer, but fewer of them are credible. There is great confusion, great fear, very great depression—far greater, I think, than England has felt, certainly since the Napoleonic scare and probably since the threat of the Armada. Nobody, I think, supposes that England herself will be conquered: confidence in the navy is supreme. But the fear of a practical defeat of the Allies on the continent is become general. Russia may have to pay a huge indemnity, going far to reimburse Germany for the cost of the war; Belgium may be permanently held unless Germany receive an indemnity to evacuate, and her seaports may be held anyhow; the Germans may reach Constantinople before the Allies, and Germany may thus hold, when the war ends, an open way to the East; and France may have to pay a large sum to regain her northern territory now held by the Germans. These are not the convictions of men here, but they have distinctly become the fears; and many men's mind are beginning to adjust themselves to the possible end of the war, as a draw, with these results. Of course such an

end would be a real German victory and—another war as soon as enough men grow up to fight it.

When the more cheerful part of public opinion, especially when any member of the Government, affects to laugh at these fears, the people say: "Well, make known the facts that you base your hope on. Precisely how many men have volunteered? Is the voluntary system a success or has it reached its limit? Precisely what is the situation in the Dardanelles? Are the allied armies strong enough to make a big drive to break through the German line in France? Have they big guns and ammunition enough? What are the facts about the chance in the Dardanelles? What have we done with reference to the Balkan States?" Thus an angry and ominous political situation is arising. The censorship on war news apparently becomes severer, and the general fear spreads and deepens. The air, of course, becomes heavily charged with such rumours as these: that if the Government continue its policy of secrecy, Lloyd George will resign, seeing no hope of a real victory: that, if he do resign, his resignation will disrupt the Government—cause a sort of earthquake; that the Government will probably fall and Lloyd George will be asked to form another one, since he is, as the public sees it, the most active and efficient man in political life; that, if all the Balkan States fail the Allies, Sir Edward Grey will be reckoned a failure and must resign; and you even now hear talk of Mr. Balfour's succeeding him.

It is impossible to say what basis there is for these and other such rumours, but they show the general very serious depression and dissatisfaction. Of that there is no doubt. Nor is there any doubt about grave differences in the Cabinet about conscription nor of grave fear in the public mind about the action of labour unions in hindering the

utmost production of ammunition, nor of the increasing feeling that the Prime Minister doesn't lead the nation. Except Lloyd George and the Chancellor of the Exchequer¹ the Cabinet seems to suffer a sort of paralysis. Lord Kitchener's speech in the House of Lords, explaining the military situation, reads like a series of month-old bulletins and was a great disappointment. Mr. Asquith's corresponding speech in the House seemed to lack complete frankness. The nation feels that it is being kept in the dark, and all the military information that it gets is discouraging. Sir Edward Grey, as philosophic and enduring a man as I know, seems much more depressed than I have ever known him to be; Bryce is very very far from cheerful; Plunkett,² whom also you know, is in the dumps—it's hard to find a cheerful or a hopeful man.

The secrecy of official life has become so great and successful that prophecy of political changes must be mere guess work. But, unless good news come from the Dardanelles in particular, I have a feeling that Asquith may resign—be forced out by the gradual pressure of public opinion; that Lloyd George will become Prime Minister, and that (probably) Sir Edward Grey may resign. Yet I cannot take the prevailing military discouragement at its face value. The last half million men and the last million pounds will decide the contest, and the Allies will have these. This very depression strengthens the nation's resolution to a degree that they for the moment forget. The blockade and the armies in the field will wear Germany down—not absolutely conquer her, but wear her down—probably in another year.

In the meantime our prestige (if that be the right word), in British judgment, is gone. As they regard it, we have

¹The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna.

²Sir Horace Plunkett.

permitted the Germans to kill our citizens, to carry on a worldwide underhand propaganda from our country (as well as in it), for which they have made no apology and no reparation but only vague assurances for the future now that their submarine fleet has been almost destroyed. They think that we are credulous to the point of simplicity to accept any assurances that Bernstorff may give—in a word, that the peace-at-any-price sentiment so dominates American opinion and the American Government that we will submit to any indignity or insult—that we will learn the Germans' real character when it is too late to save our honour or dignity. There is no doubt of the definiteness or depth of this opinion.

And I am afraid that this feeling will show itself in our future dealings with this government. The public opinion of the nation as well as the Government accepts their blockade as justified as well as necessary. They will not yield on that point, and they will regard our protests as really inspired by German influence—thus far at least: that the German propaganda has organized and encouraged the commercial objection in the United States, and that this propaganda and the peace-at-any-price sentiment demand a stiff controversy with England to offset the stiff controversy with Germany; and, after all, they ask, what does a stiff controversy with the United States amount to? I had no idea that English opinion could so quickly become practically indifferent as to what the United States thinks or does. And as nearly as I can make it out, there is not a general wish that we should go to war. The prevalent feeling is not a selfish wish for military help. In fact they think that, by the making of munitions, by the taking of loans, and by the sale of food we can help them more than by military and naval action.

Their feeling is based on their disappointment at our submitting to what they regard as German dallying with us and to German insults. They believe that, if we had sent Bernstorff home when his government made its unsatisfactory reply to our first *Lusitania* note, Germany would at once have "come down"; opportunist Balkan States would have come to the help of the Allies; Holland and perhaps the Scandinavian States would have got some consideration at Berlin for their losses by torpedoes; that more attention would have been paid by Turkey to our protest against the wholesale massacre of the Armenians; and that a better settlement with Japan about Pacific islands and Pacific influence would have been possible for the English at the end of the war. Since, they argue, nobody is now afraid of the United States, her moral influence is impaired at every capital; and I now frequently hear the opinion that, if the war lasts another year and the Germans get less and less use of the United States as a base of general propaganda in all neutral countries, especially all American countries, they are likely themselves to declare war on us as a mere defiance of the whole world and with the hope of stirring up internal trouble for our government by the activity of the Germans and the Irish in the United States, which may hinder munitions and food and loans to the Allies.

I need not remark that the English judgment of the Germans is hardly judicial. But they reply to this that every nation has to learn the real, incredible character of the Prussian by its own unhappy experience. France had so to learn it, and England, Russia, and Belgium; and we (the United States), they say, fail to profit in time by the experience of these. After the Germans have used us to the utmost in peace, they will force us into war—or even flatly declare war on us when they think they can thus

cause more embarrassment to the Allies, and when they conclude that the time is come to make sure that no great nation shall emerge from the war with a clear commercial advantage over the others; and in the meantime they will prove to the world by playing with us that a democracy is necessarily pacific and hence (in their view) contemptible. I felt warranted the other day to remark to Lord Bryce on the unfairness of much of the English judgment of us (he is very sad and a good deal depressed). "Yes," he said, "I have despaired of one people's ever really understanding another even when the two are as closely related and as friendly as the Americans and the English."

You were kind enough to inquire about my health in your last note. If I could live up to the popular conception here of my labours and responsibilities and delicate duties (which is most flattering and greatly exaggerated), I should be only a walking shadow of a man. But I am most inappreciately well. I imagine that in some year to come, I may enjoy a vacation, but I could not enjoy it now. Besides since civilization has gone backward several centuries, I suppose I've gone back with it to a time when men knew no such thing as a vacation. (Let's forgive House for his kindly, mistaken solicitude.) The truth is, I often feel that I do not know myself—body or soul, boots or breeches. This experience is making us all here different from the men we were—but in just what respects it is hard to tell. We are not within hearing of the guns (except the guns that shoot at Zeppelins when they come); but the war crowds itself in on us sensibly more and more. There are more wounded soldiers on the streets and in the parks. More and more families one knows lose their sons, more and more women their husbands. Death is so common that it seems a little thing.

Four persons have come to my house to-day (Sunday) in the hope that I may find their missing kinsmen, and two more have appealed to me on the telephone and two more still have sent me notes. Since I began this letter, Mrs. Page insisted on my going out on the edge of the city to see an old friend of many years who has just lost both his sons and whose prospective son-in-law is at home wounded. The first thing he said was: "Tell me, what is America going to do?" As we drove back, we made a call on a household whose nephew is "missing."—"Can't you possibly help us hear definitely about him?"

This sort of thing all day every day must have some effect on any man. Then—yesterday morning gave promise of a calm, clear day. I never know what sensational experience awaits me around the next corner. Then there was put on my desk the first page of a reputable weekly paper which was filled with an open letter to me written by the editor and signed. After the usual description of my multitudinous and delicate duties, I was called on to insist that my government should protest against Zeppelin raids on London because a bomb might kill me! Humour doesn't bubble much now on this side the world, for the censor had forbidden the publication of this open letter lest it should possibly cause American-German trouble! Then the American correspondents came in to verify a report that a news agency is said to have had that I was deluged with threatening letters!—More widows, more mothers looking for lost sons! . . . Once in a while—far less often than if I lived in a sane and normal world—I get a few hours off and go to a lonely golf club. Alas! there is seldom anybody there but now and then a pair of girls and now and then a pair of old fellows who have played golf for a century. Yet back in

London in the War Office I hear they indulge in disrespectful hilarity at the poor game I play. Now how do they know? (You'd better look to your score with Grayson: the English have spies in America. A major-general in their spy-service department told Mrs. Page that they knew all about Archibald¹ before he got on the ship in New York.)

All this I send you not because it is of the slightest permanent importance (except the English judgment of us) but because it will prove, if you need proof, that the world is gone mad. Everything depends on fighting power and on nothing else. A victory will save the Government. Even distinctly hopeful military news will. And English depression will vanish with a turn of the military tide. If it had been Bernstorff instead of Dumba—that would have affected even the English judgment of us. Tyrrell² remarked to me—did I write you? “Think of the freaks of sheer, blind Luck; a man of considerable ability like Dumba caught for taking a risk that an idiot would have avoided, and a fool like Bernstorff escaping!” Then he added: “I hope Bernstorff will be left. No other human being could serve the English as well as he is serving them.” So, you see, even in his depression the Englishman has some humour left—e. g., when that old sea dog Lord Fisher heard that Mr. Balfour was to become First Lord of the Admiralty, he cried out: “Damn it! he won't do: Arthur Balfour is too much of a gentleman.” So John Bull is now, after all, rather pathetic—depressed as he has not been depressed for at least a hundred years. The nobility and the common man are doing their whole duty, dying on the Bosphorus or in France without

¹It was Archibald's intercepted baggage that furnished the documents which caused Dumba's dismissal.

²Sir William Tyrrell, private secretary to Sir Edward Grey.

a murmur, or facing an insurrection in India; but the labour union man and the commercial class are holding back and hindering a victory. And there is no great national leader.

Sincerely yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTMAS IN ENGLAND, 1915

To Edward M. House

London, December 7, 1915.

MY DEAR HOUSE:

I hear you are stroking down the Tammany tiger—an easier job than I have with the British lion. You can find out exactly who your tiger is, you know the house he lives in, the liquor he drinks, the company he goes with. The British lion isn't so easy to find. At times in English history he has dwelt in Downing Street—not so now. So far as our struggle with him is concerned, he's all over the Kingdom; for he is public opinion. The governing crowd in usual times and on usual subjects can here overrun public opinion—can make it, turn it, down it, dodge it. But it isn't so now—as it affects us. Every mother's son of 'em has made up his mind that Germany must and shall be starved out, and even Sir Edward's scalp isn't safe when they suspect that he wishes to be lenient in that matter. They keep trying to drive him out, on two counts: (1) he lets goods out of Germany for the United States “and thereby handicaps the fleet”; and (2) he failed in the Balkans. Sir Edward is too much of a gentleman for this business of rough-riding over all neutral rights and for bribing those Balkan bandits.

I went to see him to-day about the *Hocking*, etc. He asked me: “Do you know that the ships of this line are really owned, in good faith, by Americans?”

“I'll answer your question,” said I, “if I may then ask

you one. No, I don't know of my own knowledge. Now, *do you know* that they are *not* owned by Americans?"

He had to confess that he, of his own knowledge, didn't know.

"Then," I said, "for the relief of us both, I pray you hurry up your prize court."

When we'd got done quarrelling about ships and I started to go, he asked me how I liked Wordsworth's war poems. "The best of all war poems," said he, "because they don't glorify war but have to do with its philosophy." Then he told me that some friend of his had just got out a little volume of these war poems selected from Wordsworth; "and I'm going to send you a copy."

"Just in time," said I, "for I have a copy of 'The Life and Letters of John Hay'¹ that I'm sending to you."

He's coming to dine with me in a night or two: he'll do anything but discuss our Note with me. And he's the only member of the Government who, I think, would like to meet our views; and he can't. To use the language of Lowell about the campaign of Governor Kent—these British are hell-bent on starving the Germans out, and neutrals have mighty few rights till that job's done.

The worst of it is that the job won't be done for a very long time. I've been making a sort of systematic round of the Cabinet to see what these fellows think about things in general at this stage of the game. Bonar Law (the Colonies) tells me that the news from the Balkans is worse than the public or the newspapers know, and that still worse news will come. Germany will have it all her own way in that quarter.

"And take Egypt and the canal?"

"I didn't say *that*," he replied. But he showed that he fears even that.

¹By William Roscoe Thayer, published in 1915.

I could go on with a dozen of 'em; but I sat down to write you a Christmas letter, and nothing else. The best news I have for you is not news at all, but I conceive it to be one of the best hopes of the future. In spite of Irishmen past, present, and to come; in spite of Germans, whose fuss will soon be over; in spite of lawyers, who (if left alone) would bankrupt empires as their clients and think they'd won a victory; I'm going to leave things here in a year and a half so that, if wise men wish to lay a plan for keeping the peace of the world, all they need to do will be to say first to Uncle Sam: "This fellow or that must understand that he can't break loose like a wild beast." If Uncle Sam agrees (and has a real navy himself), he'll wink at John Bull, and John will follow after. You see our blackleg tail-twisters have the whole thing backward. They say we truckle to the British. My plan is to lead the British—not for us to go to them but to have them come to us. We have three white men to every two white men in their whole Empire; and, when peace comes, we'll be fairly started on the road to become as rich as the war will leave them. There are four clubs in London which have no other purpose than this; and the best review¹ in the world exists chiefly for this purpose. All we need to do is to be courteous (we can do what we like if we do it courteously). Our manners, our politicians, and our newspapers are all that keep the English-speaking white man, under our lead, from ruling the world, without any treaty or entangling alliance whatsoever. If, when you went to Berlin to talk to your gentle and timid friend, the Emperor, about disarmament before the war—if about 200 American dreadnaughts and cruisers, with real grog on 'em, had come over to make a friendly call, in the North Sea, on the 300 English dread-

¹The Ambassador had in mind *The Round Table*.

naughts and cruisers—just a friendly call, admirals on admirals—the “Star-Spangled Banner” and “God Save the King”—and if General Bell, from the Philippines, had happened in London just when Kitchener happened to be home from Egypt—*then, there wouldn't have been this war now*. Nothing need have been said—no treaty, no alliance, nothing. For then 100 or more British naval ships would have joined the Panama naval procession and any possible enemy would have seen that combined fleet clean across the Pacific.

Now this may all be a mere Christmas fancy—a mere yarn about what might have been—because we wouldn't have sent ships here in our old mood; the crew would have missed one Sunday School. But it's *this kind* of thing that does the trick. But this means the practice of courtesy, and we haven't acquired the habit. Two years or more ago the training ships from Annapolis with the cadets aboard anchored down the Thames and stayed several weeks and let the boys loose in England. They go on such a voyage every two years to some country, you know. The English didn't know that fact and they took the visit as a special compliment. Their old admirals were all greatly pleased, and I hear talk about that yet. We ought to have two or three of our rear-admirals here on their fleet now. Symington, of course, is a good fellow; but he's a mere commander and attaché—not an admiral—in other words, not any particular compliment or courtesy to the British Navy. (As soon as the war began, a Japanese admiral turned up here and he is here now.) We sent over two army captains as military observers. The Russians sent a brigadier-general. We ought to have sent General Wood. You see the difference? There was no courtesy in our method. It would be the easiest and prettiest job in the world to swallow

the whole British organization, lock, stock, and barrel—King, Primate, Cabinet, Lords, and Commons, feathers and all, and to make 'em follow our *courteous* lead anywhere. The President had them in this mood when the war started and for a long time after—till the *Lusitania* seemed to be forgotten and till the lawyers began to write his Notes. He can get 'em back, after the war ends, by several acts of courtesy—if we could get into the habit of doing such things as sending generals and admirals as compliments to them. The British Empire is ruled by a wily use of courtesies and decorations. If I had the President himself to do the correspondence, if I had three or four fine generals and admirals and a good bishop or two, a thoroughbred senator or two and now and then a Supreme Court Justice to come on proper errands and be engineered here in the right way—we could do or say anything we liked and they'd do whatever we'd say. I'd undertake to underwrite the whole English-speaking world to keep peace, under our leadership. Instead whereof, every move we now make is to *follow* them or to *drive* them. The latter is impossible, and the former is unbecoming to us.

But to return to Christmas.—I could go on writing for a week in this off-hand, slap-dash way, saying wise things flippantly. But Christmas—that's the thing now. Christmas! What bloody irony it is on this side the world! Still there will be many pleasant and touching things done. An Englishman came in to see me the other day and asked if I'd send \$1,000 to Gerard¹ to use in making the English prisoners in Germany as happy as possible on Christmas Day—only I must never tell anybody who did it. A lady came on the same errand—for the British

¹James W. Gerard, American Ambassador to Germany, and, as such, in charge of British interests in Germany.

prisoners in Turkey, and with a less but still a generous sum. The heroism, the generosity, the endurance and self-restraint and courtesy of these people would melt a pyramid to tears. Of course there are yellow dogs among 'em, here and there; but the genuine, thoroughbred English man or woman is the real thing—one of the realest things in this world. So polite are they that not a single English person has yet mentioned our Note to me—not one.

But every one I've met for two days has mentioned the sending of Von Papen and Boy-Ed¹ home—not that they expect us to get into the war, but because they regard this action as maintaining our self-respect.

Nor do they neglect other things because of the war. I went to the annual dinner of the Scottish Corporation the other night—an organization which for 251 years has looked after Scotchmen stranded in London; and they collected \$20,000 then and there. There's a good deal of Christmas in 'em yet. One fellow in a little patriotic speech said that the Government is spending twenty-five million dollars a day to whip the Germans.—“Cheap work, very cheap work. We can spend twice that if necessary. Why, gentlemen, we haven't exhausted our pocket-change yet.”

Somehow I keep getting away from Christmas. It doesn't stay put. It'll be a memorable one here for its sorrows and for its grim determination—an empty chair at every English table. But nowhere in the world will it be different except in the small neutral states here and in the lands on your side the world.

How many Christmases the war may last, nobody's wise enough to know. That depends absolutely on

¹The German military and naval attachés, whose persistent and outrageous violation of American laws led to their dismissal by President Wilson.

Germany. The Allies announced their terms ten months ago, and nothing has yet happened to make them change them. That would leave the Germans with Germany and a secure peace—no obliteration or any other wild nonsense, but only a secure peace. Let 'em go back home, pay for the damage they've done, and then stay there. I do hope that the actual fighting will be ended by Christmas of next year. Of course it *may* end with dramatic suddenness at any time, this being the only way, perhaps, for the Kaiser to save his throne. Or it may go on for two or three years. My guess is that it'll end next year—a guess subject to revision, of course, by events that can't be foreseen.

But as I said before—to come back to Christmas. Mrs. Page and I send you and Mrs. House our affectionate good wishes and the hope that you keep very well and very happy in your happy, prosperous hemisphere. We do, I thank you. We haven't been better for years—never before so busy, never, I think, so free from care. We get plenty to eat (such as it is in this tasteless wet zone), at a high cost, of course; we have comfortable beds and shoes (we spend all our time in these two things, you know); we have good company, enough to do (!!), no grievances nor ailments, no ill-will, no disappointments, a keen interest in some big things—all the chips are blue, you know; we don't feel ready for halos, nor for other uncomfortable honours; we deserve less than we get and are content with what the gods send. This, I take it, is all that Martin¹ would call a comfortable mood for Christmas; and we are old enough and tough enough to have thick armour against trouble. When Worry knocks at the door, the butler tells him we're not at home.

And I see the most interesting work in the world cut

¹E. S. Martin, Editor of *Life*.

out for me for the next twenty-five or thirty years—to get such courtesy into our dealings with these our kinsmen here, public and private—as will cause them to follow us in all the developments of democracy and—in keeping the peace of the world secure. I can't impress it on you strongly enough that the English-speaking folk have got to set the pace and keep this world in order. Nobody else is equal to the job. In all our dealings with the British, public and private, we allow it to be assumed that *they* lead: they don't. *We* lead. They'll follow, if we do really lead and are courteous to them. If we hold back, the Irishman rears up and says we are surrendering to the English! Suppose we go ahead and the English surrender to us, what can your Irishmen do then? Or your German? The British Navy is a pretty good sort of dog to have to trot under your wagon. If we are willing to have ten years of thoughtful good manners, I tell you Jellicoe will eat out of your hand.

Therefore, cheer up! It's not at all improbable that Ford¹ and his cargo of cranks, if they get across the ocean, may strike a German mine in the North Sea. Then they'll die happy, as martyrs; and the rest of us will live happy, and it'll be a Merry Christmas for everybody.

Our love to Mrs. House.

Always heartily yours,

W. H. P.

To Frank N. Doubleday and Others

London, Christmas, 1915.

DEAR D. P. & Co.

. . . Now, since we're talking about the war, let me deliver my opinion and leave the subject. They're

¹Mr. Henry Ford at this time was getting together his famous peace ship, which was to sail to Europe "to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas."

killing one another all right; you needn't have any doubt about that—so many thousand every day, whether there's any battle or not. When there's "nothing to report" from France, that means the regular 5,000 casualties that happen every day. There isn't any way of getting rid of men that has been forgotten or neglected. Women and children, too, of course, starve in Serbia and Poland and are massacred in Turkey. England, though she has by very much the largest army she ever had, has the smallest of all the big armies and yet I don't know a family that had men of fighting age which hasn't lost one or more members. And the worst is to come. But you never hear a complaint. Poor Mr. Dent,¹ for instance (two sons dead), says: "It's all right. England must be saved."

And this Kingdom alone, as you know, is spending twenty-five million dollars a day. The big loan placed in the United States² would last but twenty days! If this pace of slaughter and of spending go on long enough, there won't be any men or any money left on this side the world. Yet there will be both left, of course; for somehow things never quite go to the ultimate smash that seems to come. Read the history of the French Revolution. How did the French nation survive?

It will go on, unless some unexpected dramatic military event end it, for something like another year at least—many say for two years more, and some, three years more. It'll stop, of course, whenever Germany will propose terms that the Allies can consider—or something near such terms; and it won't stop before. By blockade pressure and by fighting, the Allies are gradually wearing the Germans out. We can see here the gradual pressure

¹J. M. Dent, the London publisher.

²\$500,000,000.

of events in that direction. My guess is that they won't go into a third winter.

Well, dear gentlemen, however you may feel about it, that's enough for me. My day—every day—is divided into these parts: (1) two to three hours listening to Americans or their agents here whose cargoes are stopped, to sorrowing American parents whose boys have run away and gone into the English Army, to nurses and doctors and shell makers who wish to go to France, to bereaved English men and women whose sons are “missing”: can I have them found in Germany? (2) to answering letters about these same cheerful subjects; (3) to going over cases and documents prepared about all these sorts of troubles and forty other sorts, by the eight or ten secretaries of the Embassy, and a conference with every one of them; (4) the reading of two books of telegrams, one incoming, the other outgoing, and the preparation of a lot of answers; (5) going to the Foreign Office, not every day but often, to discuss more troubles there; (6) home to dinner at 8 o'clock—at home or somewhere else, and there is more talk about the war or about the political troubles. That for a regular daily routine for pretty nearly a year and a half! As I say, if anybody is keeping the war up for my entertainment, he now has my permission to stop. No time to read, no time to write, little time to think, little or no time to see the people you most wish to see, I often don't know the day of the week or of the month: it's a sort of life in the trenches, without the immediate physical danger. Then I have my cabinet meetings, my financial reports (money we spend for four governments: I had till recently about a million dollars subject to my check); then the commission for the relief of Belgium; then the Ambassadors and Ministers of the other neutral states—our task is worse than war!

Well, praise God for sleep. I get from seven to nine hours a night, unbroken; and I don't take Armageddon to bed with me.

I don't mind telling *you* (nobody else) that the more I see just how great statesmen work and manage great governments—the more I see of them at close range—whether in Washington or London or Berlin or Vienna or Constantinople (for these are *my* Capitals), the more I admire the methods of the Long Island farmers. Boys, I swear I could take our crowd and do a better job than many of these great men do. I have to spend a lot of time to correct their moves before the other fellow finds out the mistake. For instance I know I spent \$2,000 in telegrams before I could make the German Government understand the British military age, and the British Government understand the German military age, for exchanging prisoners who had lost two legs or arms or both eyes; and I've had to send a man to Berlin to get a financial report from one man on one floor of a building there and to take it to another man on the floor above. Just yesterday I was reminded that I had made eighteen requests for the same information of the British Government, when the nineteenth request for it came from Washington; and I have now telegraphed that same thing nineteen times since the war began. Of course everybody's worked to death. But something else ails a lot of 'em all the way from Constantinople to London. Leaving out common gutter lying (and there's much of it) the sheer stupidity of governments is amazing. They are all so human, so mighty human! I wouldn't be a government for any earthly consideration. I'd rather be a brindled dog and trot under the wagon.

But it has been an inexpressibly interesting experience to find all this out for myself. There's a sort of weary

satisfaction in feeling that you've seen too much of them to be fooled by 'em any more. And, although most men now engaged in this game of government are mere common mortals with most of the common mortal weaknesses, now and then a really big man does stumble into the business. I have my doubts whether a really big man ever deliberately goes into it. And most of the men who the crowd for the moment thinks are big men don't really turn out so. It's a game like bull fighting. The bull is likely to kill you—pretty sure to do so if you keep at the business long enough; but in the meantime you have some exciting experiences and the applause of the audience. When you get killed, they forget you—immediately. There are two rather big men in this Government, and you wouldn't guess in three rounds who they are. But in general the war hasn't so far developed very big men in any country. Else we are yet too close to them to recognize their greatness. Joffre seems to have great stuff in him; and (I assure you) you needn't ever laugh at a Frenchman again. They are a great people. As for the British, there was never such a race. It's odd—I hear that it happens just now to be the fashion in the United States to say that the British are not doing their share. There never was a greater slander. They absolutely hold the Seven Seas. They have caught about seventy submarines and some of them are now destroying German ships in the Baltic Sea. They've sent to France by several times the largest army that any people ever sent over the sea. They are financing most of their allies and they have turned this whole island into gun and shell factories. They made a great mistake at the Dardanelles and they are slower than death to change their set methods. But no family in the land, from charcoal burners to dukes, hesitates one moment to send its sons into the army.

When the news comes of their death, they never whimper. When you come right down to hard facts, the courage and the endurance of the British and the French excel anything ever before seen on this planet. All the old stories of bravery from Homer down are outdone every day by these people. I see these British at close range, full-dress and undress; and I've got to know a lot of 'em as well as we can ever come to know anybody after we get grown. There is simply no end to the silly sides of their character. But, when the real trial comes, they don't flinch; and (except the thoroughbred American) there are no such men in the world.

A seven-foot Kansas lawyer (Kansas all over him) came to see me yesterday. He came here a month ago on some legal business. He told me yesterday that he had always despised Englishmen. He's seen a few with stud-horse clothes and white spats and monocles on who had gone through Kansas to shoot in the Rocky Mountains. He couldn't understand 'em and he didn't like 'em. "So infernally uppish," said he.

"Well, what do you think of 'em now?"

"The very best people in the world," said he. I think he has a notion of enlisting!

You're still publishing books, I hear. That's a good occupation. I'd like to be doing it myself. But I can't even get time to read 'em now.

But, as you know, nobody's writing anything but war books—from Kipling to Hall Caine. Poor Kipling!—his boy's dead. I have no doubt of it. I've had all the German hospitals and prison camps searched for him in vain. These writing men and women, by the way, are as true blue and as thoroughbred as any other class. I can never forget Maurice Hewlett's brave behaviour when he thought that his flying corps son had been killed by the

Germans or drowned at sea. He's no prig, but a real man. And the women are as fine as the men. . . .

To go back to books: Of course nobody can tell what effect the war will have on the writing of them, nor what sort of new writers may come up. You may be sure that everything is stirred to its profoundest depths and will be stirred still more. Some old stagers will be laid on the shelf; that's certain. What sort of new ones will come? I asked H. G. Wells this question. He has promised to think it out and tell me. He has the power to guess some things very well. I'll put that question to Conrad when I next see him.

Does anybody in the United States take the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, to be a great man? His wife is a brilliant woman; and she has kept a diary ever since he became Prime Minister; and he now has passed the longest single term in English history. Mr. Dent thinks he's the biggest man alive, and Dent has some mighty good instincts.

Talk about troubles! Think of poor Northcliffe. He thinks he's saved the nation from its miserable government, and the government now openly abuses him in the House of Commons. Northcliffe puts on his brass knuckles and turns the *Times* building upside down and sets all the *Daily Mail* machine guns going, and has to go to bed to rest his nerves, while the row spreads and deepens. The Government keeps hell in the prayer-book because without it they wouldn't know what to do with Northcliffe; and Northcliffe is just as sure that he has saved England as he is sure the Duke of Wellington did.

To come back to the war. (We always do.) Since I wrote the first part of this letter, I spent an evening with a member of the Cabinet and he told me so much bad

military news, which they prevent the papers from publishing or even hearing, that to-night I almost share this man's opinion that the war will last till 1918. That isn't impossible. If that happens the offer that I heard a noble old buck make to a group of ladies the other night may be accepted. This old codger is about seventy-five, ruddy and saucy yet. "My dear ladies," said he, "if the war goes on and on we shall have no young men left. A double duty will fall on the old fellows. I shall be ready, when the need comes, to take four extra wives, and I daresay there are others of my generation who are as patriotic as I am."

All of which is only my long-winded, round-about diplomatic way of wishing you every one and every one of yours and all the folk in the office, their assigns, superiors, dependents, companions in labour—all, everyone and sundry, the happiest of Christmases; and when you take stock of your manifold blessings, don't forget to be thankful for the Atlantic Ocean. That's the best asset of safety that we have.

Affectionately yours,

W. H. P.

To Mrs. Charles G. Loring

6 Grosvenor Square,
London, December 7, 1915.

DEAR KITTY:

This is my Christmas letter to you and Chud—a poor thing, but the best I have to give you. At least it carries my love, dear, and my wishes that every Christmas under your own roof will be happier than the preceding one. Since your starting point is on the high level of your first Christmas in your own home—that's a good wish: isn't it?

I'm beginning to think a good deal of your mother and me. Here we are left alone by every one of you—in a foreign land; and, contrary to all predictions that any of you would have made about us four or five years ago, we're faring pretty well, thank you, and not on the edge of dying of loneliness at all. I tell you, I think we're pretty brave and hardy.

We're even capable of becoming cocky and saucy to every one of you. Be careful, then.

You see if you have a war to live with you don't necessarily need children: you'll have strife enough without 'em. We'll console ourselves with such reflections as these.

And the truth is—at least about me—that there isn't time to think of what you haven't got. Of course, I'm working, as always, to soften the relations between these two governments. So far, in spite of the pretty deep latent feeling on both sides—far worse than it ought to be and far worse than I wish it were—I'm working all the time to keep things as smooth as possible. Happily, nobody can prove it, but I believe it, that there is now and there has been all along more danger of a serious misunderstanding than anybody has known. The Germans have, of course, worked in 1000 ways to cause misunderstanding between England and the United States. Then, of course, there has been constant danger in the English bull-headed insularity which sees nothing but the Englishman's immediate need, and in the English slowness. Add to these causes the American ignorance of war and of European conditions. It has been a God's mercy for us that we have so far had a man like Sir Edward Grey in his post. And in my post, while there might well have been a better man, this much at least has been lucky—that I do have a consciousness of English

history and of our common origin and some sense of the inevitable destiny of the great English-speaking race—so that, when we have come to sharp corners in the road, I have known that whatever happen we must travel in the right general direction—have known that no temporary difference must be allowed to assume a permanent quality. I have thought several times that we had passed the worst possible place, and then a still worse one would appear. It does look now as if we had faced most of the worst difficulties that can come, but I am not sure what Congress may do or provoke. If we outlast Congress, we shall be safe. Now to come through this enormous war even with no worse feeling than already exists between the two countries—that'll be a big thing to have done. But it's work like the work of the English fleet. Nobody can prove that Jellicoe has been a great admiral. Yet the fleet has done the whole job more successfully than if it had had sea-fights and lost a part of their ships.

Our Note has left a great deal of bad feeling—suppressed, but existent. A part of it was inevitable and (I'd say) even necessary. But we put in a lot of things that seem to me to be merely disputatious, and we didn't write it in the best form. It corresponds to what you once called *suburban*: do you remember? Not thoroughbred. But we'll get over even that, especially if the Administration and the courts continue to bring the Germans to book who are insulting our dignity and destroying our property and killing Americans. If we can satisfactorily settle the *Lusitania* trouble, the whole outlook will be very good.

Your mother and I are hearing much interesting political talk. We dined last night with Mr. Bonar Law. Sir Edward Carson was there. To-day we lunched with Lady P.—the other side, you see. There are funda-

mental differences continually arising. They thought a few weeks ago that they had the Prime Minister's scalp. He proved too nimble for them. Now one person after another says to you: "Kitchener doesn't deserve the reverence the people give him." More and more folks say he's hard to work with—is domineering and selfish. Nobody seems really to know him; and there are some signs that there may be a row about him.

We've heard nothing from Harold in quite a little while. We have, you know, three of our footmen in the war. Allen was wounded at Loos—a flesh, bullet-wound. He's about well now and is soon going back. Leslie is in the trenches and a postal card came from him the other day. The third one, Philip, is a prisoner in Germany. Your mother sent him a lot of things, but we've never heard whether he received them or not. The general strain—military, political, financial—gets greater. The streets are darker than ever. The number of wounded increases rapidly. More houses are turned into hospitals. The Manchesters', next door, is a hospital now. And everybody fears worse days are to come. But they have no nerves, these English. They grit their teeth, but they go on bravely, enduring everything. We run into experiences every day that melt you, and the heroic things we hear outnumber and outdo all the stories in all the books.

I keep forgetting Xmas, Kitty, and this is my Xmas letter. You needn't put it in your stocking, but you'd really better burn it up. It would be the ruination of the world if my frank comments got loose. It's for you and Chud only. You may fill your stocking full of the best wishes you ever received—enough to fill the polar bear skin. And I send you both my love.

W. H. P.

*To Ralph W., Arthur W., and Frank C. Page*¹

London, Christmas, 1915.

DEAR BOYS: R. W. P., A. W. P., F. C. P.

A Merry Christmas to you! Good cheer, good company, good food, good fires, good golf. I suppose (though the Lord only knows) that I'll have to be here another Christmas; but another after that? Not on your life!

I think I'm as cheerful and hopeful as I ever was, but this experience here and the war have caused my general confidence in the orderly progress of civilization somewhat to readjust itself. I think that any man who looks over the world and who knows something of the history of human society—I mean any American who really believes in democracy and in human progress—is somewhat saddened to see the exceeding slowness of that progress. In the early days of our Republic hopeful Americans held the opinion that the other countries of the world would follow our example; that is to say, would educate the people, would give the masses a chance to become real men, would make their governments and institutions serve the people, would dispense with kings and gross privileges and become free. Well, they haven't done it. France is nominally a republic, but the masses of its people are far, far backward. Switzerland is a republic, but a very small one. Denmark is a very free state, in spite of its monarchical form of government. In South America they think they have republics, but they haven't the slightest idea of the real education and freedom of the people. Practically, therefore, the United States and the self-governing British colonies are the only really free countries of much importance in the whole world—

¹The Ambassador's sons.

these and this Kingdom. Our example hasn't been followed. In Europe, Germany and Russia in particular have monarchs who are in absolute command. Thus on both sides the world, so far as government and the danger of war are concerned, there hasn't been very much real progress in five hundred years.

This is a little disappointing. And it means, of course, that we are likely to have periodical earthquakes like this present one till some radical change come. Republics have their faults, no doubt. But they have at least this virtue: that no country where the people really have the control of their government is likely to start out deliberately on any war of conquest—is not likely to run amuck—and will not regard its population as mere food for shell and powder.

Nor do I believe that our example of our government has, relatively to our strength and wealth and population, as much influence in the world as we had one hundred years ago. Our people have no foreign consciousness and I know that our government knows almost nothing about European affairs; nor do our people know. As regards foreign affairs our government lacks proper machinery. Take this as an illustration: The President wrote vigorous and proper notes about the *Lusitania* and took a firm stand with Germany. Germany has paid no attention to the *Lusitania* outrage. Yet (as I understand it) the people will not run the risk of war—or the Administration thinks they will not—and hence the President can do nothing to make his threat good. Therefore we stand in a ridiculous situation; and nobody cares how many notes we write. I don't know that the President could have done differently—unless, before he sent the *Lusitania* notes, he had called Congress together and submitted his notes to Congress. But, as the matter

stands, the Germans are merely encouraged to blow up factories and practically to carry on war in the United States, because they know we can (or will) do nothing. Mere notes break nobody's skin.

We don't seem to have any machinery to bring any influence to bear on foreign governments or on foreign opinion; and, this being so, it is little wonder that the rest of the world does not follow our republican example.

And this sort of impotence in influence has curious effects at home. For example, the ship-purchase bill, as it was at the last session of Congress, was an economic crime. See what has happened: We have waked up to the fact that we must have a big navy. Well, a navy is of no far-fighting value unless we have auxiliary ships and a lot of 'em. Admiral Jellicoe has 3,000 ships under his command; and he couldn't keep his fleet on the job if he didn't have them. Most of them are commandeered merchant, passenger, and fishing ships. Now we haven't merchant, passenger, and fishing ships to commandeer. We've got to build and buy auxiliary ships to our navy. This, to my mind, makes the new ship-purchase bill, or something like it, necessary. Else our navy, when it comes to the scratch, will be of no fighting value, however big it be. It's the price we've got to pay for not having built up a merchant marine. And we haven't built up a merchant marine because we've had no foreign consciousness. While our Irishmen have been leading us to twist the Lion's tail, we've been depending almost wholly on English ships—and, in late years, on German ships. You can't cross the ocean yet in a decent American ship. You see, we've declared our independence; and, so far as individual development goes, we've worked it out. But the governmental machinery for maintaining it and for making it visible to the world—we've simply neglected to

build it or to shape it. Hence the President's notes hurt nobody and accomplish nothing; nor could our navy put up a real fight, for lack of colliers and supply ships. It's the same way all around the horizon. And these are the reasons we haven't made our democracy impress the world more.

A democracy is not a quick-trigger war-engine and can't be made into one. When the quick-trigger engines get to work, they forget that a democracy does not consider fighting the first duty of man. You can bend your energies to peaceful pursuits or you can bend them to war. It's hard to do both at the same time. The Germans are the only people who have done both at the same time; and even they didn't get their navy big enough for their needs.

When the infernal thing's over—that'll be a glad day; and the European world won't really know what it has cost in men and money and loss of standards till it is over. . . .

Affectionately,

W. H. P.

*To Walter H. Page, Jr.*¹

London, Christmas, 1915.

SIR:

For your first Christmas, I have the honour to send you my most affectionate greetings; and in wishing you all good health, I take the liberty humbly to indicate some of the favours of fortune that I am pleased to think I enjoy in common with you.

First—I hear with pleasure that you are quite well content with yourself—not because of a reasoned conviction of your own worth, which would be mere vanity and un-

¹The Ambassador's infant grandson, son of Arthur W. Page.

worthy of you, but by reason of a philosophical disposition. It is too early for you to bother over problems of self-improvement—as for me it is too late; wherefore we are alike in the calm of our self-content. What others may think or say about us is a subject of the smallest concern to us. Therefore they generally speak well of us; for there is little satisfaction in speaking ill of men who care nothing for your opinion of them. Then, too, we are content to be where we happen to be—a fact that we did not order in the beginning and need not now concern ourselves about. Consider the eternal coming and going of folk. On every road many are travelling one way and an equal number are travelling the other way. It is obvious that, if they were all content to remain at the places whence they set forth, the distribution of the population would be the same. Why therefore move hither and yon at the cost of much time and labour and money, since nothing is accomplished thereby? We spare ourselves by being content to remain where we are. We thereby have the more time for reflection. Nor can we help observing with a smile that all persons who have good reasons to see us themselves make the necessary journey after they discover that we remain fixed.

Again, people about us are continually doing this service and that for some other people—running errands, mending fences, bearing messages, building, and tearing down; and they all demand equal service in return. Thus a large part of mankind keeps itself in constant motion like bubbles of water racing around a pool at the foot of a water-fall—or like rabbits hurrying into their warrens and immediately hurrying out again. Whereas, while these antics amuse and sadden us, we for the most part remain where we are. Hence our wants are few; they are generally most courteously supplied without our ask-

ing; or, if we happen to be momentarily forgotten, we can quickly secure anything in the neighbourhood by a little judicious squalling. Why, then, should we whirl as bubbles or scurry as rabbits? Our conquering self-possession gives a masterful charm to life that the victims of perpetual locomotion never seem to attain.

You have discovered, and my experience confirms yours, that a perpetual self-consciousness brings most of the misery of the world. Men see others who are richer than they; or more famous, or more fortunate—so they think; and they become envious. You have not reached the period of such empty vanity, and I have long passed it. Let us, therefore, make our mutual vows not to be disturbed by the good luck or the good graces of others, but to continue, instead, to contemplate the contented cat on the rug and the unenvious sky that hangs over all alike.

This mood will continue to keep our lives simple. Consider our diet. Could anything be simpler or better? We are not even tempted by the poisonous victuals wherewith mankind destroys itself. The very first sound law of life is to look to the belly; for it is what goes into a man that ruins him. By avoiding murderous food, we may hope to become centenarians. And why not? The golden streets will not be torn up and we need be in no indecent haste to travel even on them. The satisfactions of this life are just beginning for us; and we shall be wise to endure this world for as long a period as possible.

And sleep is good—long sleep and often; and your age and mine permit us to indulge in it without the sneers of the lark or the cock or the dawn.

I pray you, sir, therefore, accept my homage as the philosopher that you are and my assurance of that high

esteem indicated by my faithful imitation of your virtues.

I am,

With the most distinguished consideration,

With the sincerest esteem, and

With the most affectionate good wishes,

Sir,

Your proud,

Humble,

Obedient

GRANDDADDY.

To Master Walter Hines Page,

On Christmas, 1915.

CHAPTER XVIII

A PERPLEXED AMBASSADOR

THE beginning of the new year saw no improvement in German-American relations. Germany and Austria continued to violate the pledge given by Bernstorff after the sinking of the *Arabic*—if that shifty statement could be regarded as a “pledge.” On November 7, 1915, the Austrians sank the *Ancona*, in the Mediterranean, drowning American citizens under conditions of particular atrocity, and submarine attacks on merchant ships, without the “warning” or attempt to save passengers and crew which Bernstorff had promised, took place nearly every day. On April 18, 1916, the *Sussex* was torpedoed in the English Channel, without warning and with loss of American life. This caused what seemed to be a real crisis; President Wilson sent what was practically an ultimatum to Germany, demanding that it “immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of warfare against passenger and freight carrying vessels,” declaring that, unless it did so, the United States would sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire. In reply, Germany apparently backed down and gave the promise the President had demanded. However, it coupled this concession with an expression of its expectation that the United States would compel Great Britain to observe international law in the blockade. As this latter statement might be interpreted as a qualification of its surrender, the incident hardly ended satisfactorily.

To Arthur W. Page

Bournemouth

May 22, 1916.

DEAR ARTHUR:

I stick on the back of this sheet a letter that Sydney Brooks wrote from New York (May 1st) to the *Daily Mail*. He formulates a question that we have many times asked ourselves and that, in one way or other, comes into everybody's mind here. Of course the common fellow in Jonesville who has given most of his time and energy to earning a living for his wife and children has no foreign consciousness, whether his Jonesville be in the United States or in England or in France or in Zanzibar. The real question is, *Do these fellows in Jonesville make up the United States?* or has there been such a lack of prompt leadership as to make all the Jonesville people confused? It's hard for me to judge at this distance just how far the President has led and just how far he has waited and been pushed along. Suppose he had stood on the front steps every morning before breakfast for a month after the *Lusitania* went down and had called to the people in the same tone that he used in his note to Germany—had sounded a bugle call—would we have felt as we now feel? What would the men in Jonesville have done then? Would they have got their old guns down from over the doors? Or do they so want peace and so think that they can have peace always that they've lost their spine? Have they really been Bryanized, Fordized, Janeaddamsized, Sundayschooled, and Chautauquaed into supine creatures to whom the United States and the ideals of the Fathers mean nothing? Who think a German is as good as an Englishman? Who have no particular aims or aspirations for our country and for democracy? When T. R. was in

the White House he surely was an active fellow. He called us to exercise ourselves every morning. He bawled "Patriotism" loudly. We surely thought we were awake during those strenuous years. Were we really awake or did we only look upon him and his antics as a sort of good show? All that time Bryan was peace-a-footing and prince-of-peacing. Now did he really have the minds of the people or did T. R.?

If we've really gone to sleep and if the United States stands for nothing but personal comfort and commercialism to our own people, what a job you and the patriotic men of your generation have cut out for you!

My own conviction (which I don't set great store by) is that our isolation and prosperity have not gone so far in softening us as it seems. They've gone a good way, no doubt; but I think that even the Jonesville people yet feel their Americanism. What they need is—leadership. Their Congressmen are poor, timid, pork-barrel creatures. Their governors are in training for the Senate. The Vice-President reads no official literature of the war, "because then I might have a conviction about it and that wouldn't be neutral." And so on. If the people had a *real* leadership, I believe they'd wake up even in Jonesville.

Well, let's let these things go for the moment. How's the Ambassador?¹ And the Ambassador's mother and sister? They're nice folks of whom and from whom I hear far too little. Give 'em my love. I don't want you to rear a fighting family. But these kids won't and mustn't grow up peace-cranks—not that anybody objects to peace, but I do despise and distrust a crank, a crank about anything. That's the lesson we've got to learn from these troubled times. First, let cranks alone—the other side of the street is good enough for them. Then,

¹A playful reference to the Ambassador's infant grandson, Walter H. Page, Jr.

if they persist, I see nothing to do but to kill 'em, and that's troublesome and inconvenient.

But, as I was saying, bless the babies. I can't begin to tell you how very much I long to see them, to make their acquaintance, to chuckle 'em and punch 'em and see 'em laugh, and to see just what sort of kids they be.

I've written you how in my opinion there's no country in the world fit for a modern gentleman and man-of-character to live in except (1) the United States and (2) this island. And this island is chiefly valuable for the breed of men—the right stock. They become more valuable to the world after they go away from home. But the right blood's here. This island's breed is the best there is. An Englishman or a Scotchman is the best ancestor in this world, many as his shortcomings are. Some Englishman asked me one night in what, I thought, the Englishman appeared at his best. I said, "As an ancestor to Americans!" And this is the fundamental reason why we (two peoples) belong close together. Reasons that flow from these are such as follows: (1) The race is the seamastering race and the navy-managing race and the ocean-carrying race; (2) the race is the literary race, (3) the exploring and settling and colonizing race, (4) the race to whom fair play appeals, and (5) that insists on individual development.

Your mother having read these two days 1,734 pages of memoirs of the Coke family, one of whose members wrote the great law commentaries, another carried pro-American votes in Parliament in our Revolutionary times, refused peerages, defied kings and—begad! here they are now, living in the same great house and saying and doing what they darn please—we know this generation of 'em!—well, your mother having read these two big volumes about the old ones and told me 175 good stories out of

these books, bless her soul! she's gone to sleep in a big chair on the other side of the table. Well she may, she walked for two hours this morning over hills and cliffs and through pine woods and along the beach. I guess I'd better wake her up and get her to go to bed—as the properer thing to do at this time o'night, viz. 11. My golf this afternoon was too bad to confess. But I must say that a 650 and a 730 yard hole argues the audacity of some fellow and the despair of many more. Nature made a lot of obstructions there and Man made more. It must be seven or eight miles around that course! It's almost a three hour task to follow my slow ball around it. I suggested we play with howitzers instead of clubs. Good night!

W. H. P.

To Frank N. Doubleday and Others

Royal Bath and East Cliff Hotel,
Bournemouth, May 29, 1916.

DEAR D. P. & Co.:

I always have it in mind to write you letters; but there's no chance in my trenches in London; and, since I have not been out of London for nearly two years—since the war began—only an occasional half day and a night—till now—naturally I've concocted no letter. I've been down here a week—a week of sunshine, praise God—and people are not after me every ten minutes, or Governments either; and my most admirable and efficient staff (now grown to one hundred people) permit few letters and telegrams to reach me. There never was a little rest more grateful. The quiet sea out my window shows no sign of crawling submarines; and, in general, it's as quiet and peaceful here as in Garden City itself.

I'm on the home-stretch now in all my thoughts and plans. Three of my four years are gone, and the fourth

will quickly pass. That's not only the limit of my leave, but it's quite enough for me. I shouldn't care to live through another such experience, if the chance should ever come to me. It has changed my whole life and my whole outlook on life; and, perhaps, you'd like to hear some impressions that it has made upon me.

The first impression—perhaps the strongest—is a loss of permanent interest in Europe, especially all Europe outside of this Kingdom. I have never had the illusion that Europe had many things that we needed to learn. The chief lesson that it has had, in my judgment, is the lesson of the art of living—the comforts and the courtesies of life, the refinements and the pleasures of conversation and of courteous conduct. The upper classes have this to teach us; and we need and can learn much from them. But this seems to me all—or practically all. What we care most for are individual character, individual development, and a fair chance for every human being. Character, of course, the English have—immense character, colossal character. But even they have not the dimmest conception of what we mean by a fair chance for every human being—not the slightest. In one thousand years they *may* learn it from us. Now on the continent, the only important Nation that has any character worth mentioning is the French. Of course the little nations—some of them—have character, such as Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, etc. But these are all. The others are simply rotten. In giving a free chance to every human creature, we've nothing to learn from anybody. In character, I bow down to the English and Scotch; I respect the Frenchman highly and admire his good taste. But, for our needs and from our point of view, the English can teach us only two great lessons—character and the art of living (if you are rich).

The idea that we were brought up on, therefore, that Europe is the home of civilization in general—nonsense! It's a periodical slaughter-pen, with all the vices that this implies. I'd as lief live in the Chicago stock-yards. There they kill beeves and pigs. Here they kill men and (incidentally) women and children. I should no more think of encouraging or being happy over a child of mine becoming a European of any Nation than I should be happy over his fall from Grace in any other way.

Our form of government and our scheme of society—God knows they need improving—are yet so immeasurably superior, as systems, to anything on this side the world that no comparison need be made.

My first strong impression, then, is not that Europe is "effete"—that isn't it. It is mediæval—far back toward the Dark Ages, much of it yet uncivilized, held back by *inertia* when not held back by worse things. The caste system is a constant burden almost as heavy as war itself and often quite as cruel.

The next impression I have is, that, during the thousand years that will be required for Europe to attain real (modern) civilization, wars will come as wars have always come in the past. The different countries and peoples and governments will not and cannot learn the lesson of federation and coöperation so long as a large mass of their people have no voice and no knowledge except of their particular business. Compare the miles of railway in proportion to population with the same proportion in the United States—or the telephones, or the use of the mails, or of bank checks; or make any other practical measure you like. Every time, you'll come back to the discouraging fact that the masses in Europe are driven as cattle. So long as this is true, of course, they'll be driven periodically into wars. So many countries, so many races,

so many languages all within so small an area as Europe positively invite deadly differences. If railroads had been invented before each people had developed its own separate language, Europe could somehow have been coördinated, linked up, federated, made to look at life somewhat in the same way. As it is, wars will be bred here periodically for about another thousand years. The devil of this state of things is that they may not always be able to keep their wars at home.

For me, then, except England and the smaller exceptions that I have mentioned, Europe will cut no big figure in my life. In all the humanities, we are a thousand years ahead of any people here. So also in the adaptabilities and the conveniences of life, in its versatilities and in its enjoyments. Most folk are stolid and sad or dull on this side of the world. Else how could they take their kings and silly ceremonies seriously?

Now to more immediate and definite impressions. I have for a year had the conviction that we ought to get into the war—into the economic war—for the following among many reasons.

1. That's the only way to shorten it. We could cause Germany's credit (such as she has) instantly to collapse, and we could hasten her hard times at home which would induce a surrender.

2. That's the only way we can have any real or important influence in adjusting whatever arrangements can be made to secure peace.

3. That's the best way we can inspire complete respect for us in the minds of other nations and thereby, perhaps, save ourselves from some wars in the future.

4. That's the best way we can assert our own character—our Americanism, and forever get rid of all kinds of hyphens.

5. That's the only way we shall ever get a real and sensible preparedness, which will be of enormous educational value even if no military use should ever be made of our preparation.

6. That's the only way American consciousness will ever get back to the self-sacrificing and patriotic point of view of the Fathers of the Republic.

7. That's the best way to emancipate ourselves from cranks.

8. That's the only way we'll ever awaken in our whole people a foreign consciousness that will enable us to assert our natural influence in the world—political, financial, social, commercial—the best way to make the rest of the world our customers and friends and followers.

All the foregoing I have fired at the Great White Chief for a year by telegraph and by mail; and I have never fired it anywhere else till now. Be very quiet, then.

No man with whom I have talked or whose writings I have read seems to me to have an adequate conception of the colossal changes that the war is bringing and will bring. Of course, I do not mean to imply that I have any adequate conception. Nobody can yet grasp it. The loss of (say) ten million men from production of work or wares or children; what a changed world that fact alone will make! The presence in all Europe of (perhaps) fifteen or twenty million more women than men will upset the whole balance of society as regards the sexes. The loss of most of the accumulated capital of Europe and the vast burdens of debt for the future to pay will change the financial relations of the whole world. From these two great losses—men and money—God knows the many kinds of changes that will come. Women are doing and will continue to do many kinds of work hitherto done by men.

Of course there are some great gains. Many a flabby or abject fellow will come out of the war a real man: he'll be nobody's slave thereafter. The criminal luxury of the rich will not assert itself again for a time. The unparalleled addition to the world's heroic deeds will be to the good of mankind, as the unparalleled suffering has eclipsed all records. The survivors will be in an heroic mood for the rest of their lives. In general, life will start on a new plane and a lot of old stupid habits and old party quarrels and class prejudices will disappear. To get Europe going again will call for new resolution and a new sort of effort. Nobody can yet see what far-reaching effects it will have on government.

If I could make the English and Scotch over, I could greatly improve them. I'd cut out the Englishman's arrogance and key him up to a quicker gait. Lord! he's a slow beast. But he's worked out the germ and the beginning of all real freedom, and he has character. He knows how to conserve and to use wealth. He's a great John Bull, after all. And as for commanding the sea, for war or trade, you may properly bow down to him and pay him homage. The war will, I think, quicken him up. It will lessen his arrogance—to *us*, at least. I think it will make him stronger and humbler. And, whatever his virtues and his faults, he's the only Great Power we can go hand in hand with. . . .

These kinds of things have been going on now nearly two years, and not till these ten days down here have I had time or chance or a free mind to think them over; and now there's nothing in particular to think—nothing but just to go on, doing these 40,000 things (and they take a new turn every day) the best I can, without the slightest regard to consequences. I've long ago passed the place where, having acted squarely according to my best judg-

ment, I can afford to pay the slightest attention to what anybody thinks. I see men thrown on the scrap heap every day. Many of them deserve it, but a good many do not. In the abnormal state of mind that everybody has, there are inevitable innocent misunderstandings, which are as fatal as criminal mistakes. The diplomatic service is peculiarly exposed to misunderstandings: and, take the whole diplomatic service of all nations as shown up by this great strain, it hasn't stood the test very well. I haven't the respect for it that I had when I started. Yet, God knows, I have a keen sympathy for it. I've seen some of 'em displaced; some of 'em lie down; some of 'em die.

As I've got closer and closer to big men, as a rule they shrink up. They are very much like the rest of us—many of 'em more so. Human nature is stripped in these times of most of its disguises, and men have to stand and be judged as a rule by their real qualities. Among all the men in high place here, Sir Edward Grey stands out in my mind bigger, not smaller, than he stood in the beginning. He's a square, honourable gentleman, if there is one in this world. And it is he, of course, with whom I have had all my troubles. It's been a truly great experience to work and to quarrel with such a man. We've kept the best friendship—a constantly ripening one. There are others like him—only smaller.

Yet they are all in turn set upon by the press or public opinion and hounded like criminals. They try (somebody tries) to drive 'em out of office every once in a while. If there's anything I'm afraid of, it's the newspapers. The correspondents are as thick as flies in summer—all hunting sensations—especially the yellow American press. I play the game with these fellows always squarely, sometimes I fear indiscreetly. But what is discretion? That's

the hardest question of all. We have regular meetings. I tell 'em everything I can—always on the condition that I'm kept out of the papers. If they'll never mention me, I'll do everything possible for them. Absolute silence of the newspapers (as far as I can affect it) is the first rule of safety. So far as I know, we've done fairly well; but always in proportion to silence. I don't want any publicity. I don't want any glory. I don't want any office. I don't want nothin'—but to do this job squarely, to get out of this scrape, to go off somewhere in the sunshine and to see if I can slip back into my old self and see the world sane again. Yet I'm immensely proud that I have had the chance to do some good—to keep our record straight—as far as I can, and to be of what service I can to these heroic people.

Out of it all, one conviction and one purpose grows and becomes clearer. The world isn't yet half-organized. In the United States we've lived in a good deal of a fool's paradise. The world isn't half so safe a place as we supposed. Until steamships and telegraphs brought the nations all close together, of course we could enjoy our isolation. We can't do so any longer. One mad fool in Berlin has turned the whole earth topsy-turvy. We'd forgotten what our forefathers learned—the deadly dangers of real monarchs and of castes and classes. There are a lot of 'em left in the world yet. We've grown rich and—weak; we've let cranks and old women shape our ideas. We've let our politicians remain provincial and ignorant.

And believe me, dear D. P. & Co. with affectionate greeting to every one of you and to every one of yours, collectively and singly,

Yours heartily,

W. H. P.

*Memorandum written after attending the service at
St. Paul's in memory of Lord Kitchener.¹*

American Embassy, London.

There were two Kitcheners, as every informed person knows—(1) the popular hero and (2) the Cabinet Minister with whom it was impossible for his associates to get along. He made his administrative career as an autocrat dealing with dependent and inferior peoples. This experience fixed his habits and made it impossible for him to do team work or to delegate work or even to inform his associates of what he had done or was doing. While, therefore, his name raised a great army, he was in many ways a hindrance in the Cabinet. First one thing and then another was taken out of his hands—ordnance, munitions, war plans. When he went to Gallipoli, some persons predicted that he would never come back. There was a hot meeting of the Cabinet at which he was asked to go to Russia, to make a sort of return visit for the visit that important Russians had made here, and to link up Russia's military plans with the plans of the Western Allies. He is said to have remarked that he was going only because he had been ordered to go. There was a hope and a feeling again that he might not come back till after the war.

Now just how much truth there is in all this, one has to guess; but undoubtedly a good deal. He did much in raising the army, but his name did more. What an extraordinary situation! The great hero of the Nation an impossible man to work with. The Cabinet could not tell the truth about him: the people would not believe it and would make the Cabinet suffer. Moreover, such a row would have given comfort to the enemy. Kitchener,

¹Drowned on the *Hampshire*, June 5, 1916, off the coast of Scotland.

on his part, could not afford to have an open quarrel. The only solution was to induce him to go away for a long time. Both sides saw that. Such thoughts were in everybody's mind while the impressive funeral service was said and sung in St. Paul's. The Great Hero, who had failed, was celebrated of course as a Great Hero—quite truly and yet far from true. For him his death came at a lucky time: his work was done.

There is even a rumour, which I don't for a moment believe, that he is alive on the Orkney Islands and prefers to disappear there till the war ends. This is fantastic, and it was doubtless suggested by the story that he did disappear for several years while he was a young officer.

I could not help noticing, when I saw all the Cabinet together at the Cathedral, how much older many of them look than they looked two years ago. Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, who is really an old man, Lloyd George—each of these seems ten years older. And so does the King. The men in responsible places who are not broken by the war will be bent. General French, since his retirement to command of the forces in England, seems much older. So common is this quick aging that Lady Jellicoe, who went to Scotland to see her husband after the big naval battle, wrote to Mrs. Page in a sort of rhapsody and with evident surprise that the Admiral really did not seem older! The weight of this thing is so prodigious that it is changing all men who have to do with it. Men and women (who do not wear mourning) mention the death of their sons in a way that a stranger might mistake for indifference. And it has a curious effect on marriages. Apparently every young fellow who gets a week's leave from the trenches comes home and marries and, of course, goes straight back—especially the young

officers. You see weddings all day as you pass the favourite churches; and already the land is full of young widows.

To Edwin A. Alderman¹

Embassy of the U. S. A., London,
June 22, 1916.

MY DEAR ED ALDERMAN:

I shall not forget how good you were to take time to write me a word about the meeting of the Board—the Board: there's no other one in that class—at Hampton,² and I did most heartily appreciate the knowledge that you all remembered me. Alas! it's a long, long time ago when we all met—so long ago that to me it seems a part of a former incarnation. These three years—especially these two years of the war—have changed my whole outlook on life and foreshortened all that came before. I know I shall never link back to many things (and alas! too, to many people) that once seemed important and surely were interesting. Life in these trenches (five warring or quarrelling governments mining and sapping under me and shooting over me)—two years of universal ambassadorship in this hell are enough—enough I say, even for a man who doesn't run away from responsibilities or weary of toil. And God knows how it has changed me and is changing me: I sometimes wonder, as a merely intellectual and quite impersonal curiosity.

Strangely enough I keep pretty well—very well, in fact. Perhaps I've learned how to live more wisely than I knew in the old days; perhaps again, I owe it to my old grandfather who lived (and enjoyed) ninety-four years. I

¹President of the University of Virginia.

²Hampton Institute, at Hampton, Va.

have walked ten miles to-day and I sit down as the clock strikes eleven (P. M.) to write this letter.

You will recall more clearly than I certain horrible, catastrophic, universal-ruin passages in Revelation—monsters swallowing the universe, blood and fire and clouds and an eternal crash, rolling ruin enveloping all things—well, all that's come. There are, perhaps, ten million men dead of this war and, perhaps, one hundred million persons to whom death would be a blessing. Add to these as many millions more whose views of life are so distorted that blank idiocy would be a better mental outlook, and you'll get a hint (and only a hint) of what the continent has already become—a bankrupt slaughter-house inhabited by unmated women. We have talked of "problems" in our day. We never had a problem; for the worst task we ever saw was a mere blithe pastime compared with what these women and the few men that will remain here must face. The hills about Verdun are not blown to pieces worse than the whole social structure and intellectual and spiritual life of Europe. I wonder that anybody is sane.

Now we have swung into a period and a state of mind wherein all this seems normal. A lady said to me at a dinner party (think of a dinner party at all!), "Oh, how I shall miss the war when it ends! Life without it will surely be dull and tame. What can we talk about? Will the old subjects ever interest us again?" I said, "Let's you and me try and see." So we talked about books—not war books—old country houses that we both knew, gardens and gold and what not; and in fifteen minutes we swung back to the war before we were aware.

I get out of it, as the days rush by, certain fundamental convictions, which seem to me not only true—true beyond any possible cavil—truer than any other political things are true—and far more important than any other con-

temporary facts whatsoever in any branch of endeavour, but better worth while than anything else that men now living may try to further:

1. The cure for democracy is more democracy. The danger to the world lies in autocrats and autocracies and privileged classes; and these things have everywhere been dangerous and always will be. There's no security in any part of the world where people cannot think of a government without a king, and there never will be. You cannot conceive of a democracy that will unprovoked set out on a career of conquest. If all our religious missionary zeal and cash could be turned into convincing Europe of this simple and obvious fact, the longest step would be taken for human advancement that has been taken since 1776. If Carnegie, or, after he is gone, his Peace People could see this, his Trust might possibly do some good.

2. As the world stands, the United States and Great Britain must work together and stand together to keep the predatory nations in order. A League to Enforce Peace and the President's idea of disentangling alliances are all in the right direction, but vague and general and cumbersome, a sort of bastard children of Neutrality. *The thing, the only thing* is—a perfect understanding between the English-speaking peoples. That's necessary, and that's all that's necessary. We must boldly take the lead in that. I frankly tell my friends here that the English have got to throw away their damned arrogance and their insularity and that we Americans have got to throw away our provincial ignorance ("What is abroad to us?"), hang our Irish agitators and shoot our hyphenates and bring up our children with reverence for English history and in the awe of English literature. This is the only job now in the world worth the whole zeal and

energy of all first-class, thoroughbred English-speaking men. We must lead. We are natural leaders. The English must be driven to lead. Item: We must get their lads into our universities, ours into theirs. They don't know how to do it, except the little dribble of Rhodes men. Think this out, remembering what fools we've been about exchange professors with Germany! How much good could Fons Smith¹ do in a thousand years, on such an errand as he went on to Berlin? And the English don't know *how* to do it. They are childish (in some things) beyond belief. An Oxford or Cambridge man never thinks of going back to his university except about twice a lifetime when his college formally asks him to come and dine. Then he dines as docilely as a scared Freshman. I am a D. C. L. of Oxford. I know a lot of their faculty. They are hospitality itself. But I've never yet found out one important fact about the university. They never tell me. I've been down at Cambridge time and again and stayed with the Master of one of the colleges. I can no more get at what they do and how they do it than I could get at the real meaning of a service in a Buddhist Temple. I have spent a good deal of time with Lord Rayleigh, who is the Chancellor of Cambridge University. He never goes there. If he were to enter the town, all the men in the university would have to stop their work, get on their parade-day gowns, line-up by precedent and rank and go to meet him and go through days of ceremony and incantations. I think the old man has been there once in five years. Now this mediævalism must go—or be modified. You fellers who have universities must work a real alliance—a big job here. But to go on.

¹C. Alphonso Smith, Professor of English, U. S. Naval Academy; Roosevelt Professor at Berlin, 1910-11.

The best informed English opinion is ripe for a complete working understanding with us. We've got to work up our end—get rid of our ignorance of foreign affairs, our shirt-sleeve, complaining kind of diplomacy, our sport of twisting the lion's tail and such things and fall to and bring the English out. It's the *one* race in this world that's got the guts.

Hear this in confirmation: I suppose 1,000 English women have been to see me—as a last hope—to ask me to have inquiries made in Germany about their “missing” sons or husbands, generally sons. They are of every class and rank and kind, from marchioness to scrub-woman. Every one tells her story with the same dignity of grief, the same marvellous self-restraint, the same courtesies and deference and sorrowful pride. Not one has whimpered—but one. And it turned out that she was a Belgian. It's the breed. Spartan mothers were theatrical and pinchbeck compared to these women.

I know a lady of title, very well to do, who for a year got up at 5:30 and drove herself in her own automobile from her home in London to Woolwich where she worked all day long in a shell factory as a volunteer and got home at 8 o'clock at night. At the end of a year they wanted her to work in a London place where they keep the records of the Woolwich work. “Think of it,” said she, as she shook her enormous diamond ear-rings as I sat next to her at dinner one Sunday night not long ago, “think of it—what an easy time I now have. I don't have to start till half-past seven and I get home at half-past six!”

I could fill forty pages with stories like these. This very Sunday I went to see a bedridden old lady who sent me word that she had something to tell me. Here it was: An English flying man's machine got out of order

and he had to descend in German territory. The Germans captured him and his machine. They ordered him to take two of their flying men in his machine to show them a particular place in the English lines. He declined. "Very well, we'll shoot you, then." At last he consented. The three started. The Englishman quietly strapped himself in. There were no straps for the two Germans. The Englishman looped-the-loop. The Germans fell out. The Englishman flew back home. "My son has been to see me from France. He told me that. He knows the man"—thus said the old lady and thanked me for coming to hear it! She didn't know that the story has been printed.

But the real question is, "How are you?" Do you keep strong? Able, without weariness, to keep up your good work? I heartily hope so, old man. Take good care of yourself—very.

My love to Mrs. Alderman. Please don't quote me—yet. I have to be very silent publicly about everything. After March 4th, I shall again be free.

Yours always faithfully,

W. H. P.

CHAPTER XIX

WASHINGTON IN THE SUMMER OF 1916

I

IN JULY Page received a cablegram summoning him to Washington. This message did not explain why his presence was desired, nor on this point was Page ever definitely enlightened, though there were more or less vague statements that a "change of atmosphere" might better enable the Ambassador to understand the problems which were then engrossing the State Department.

The President had now only a single aim in view. From the date of the so-called *Sussex* "pledge," May 4, 1916, until the resumption of submarine warfare on February 1, 1917, Mr. Wilson devoted all his energies to bringing the warring powers together and establishing peace. More than one motive was inspiring the President in this determination. That this policy accorded with his own idealistic tendencies is true, and that he aspired to a position in history as the great "peace maker" is probably the fact, but he had also more immediate and practical purposes in mind. Above all, Mr. Wilson was bent on keeping the United States out of the war; he knew that there was only one certain way of preserving peace in this country, and that was by bringing the war itself to an end. "An early peace is all that can prevent the Germans from driving us at last into the war," Page wrote at about this time; and this single sentence gives the key to the President's activities for the succeeding nine months. The negotiations over the *Sussex* had taught

Mr. Wilson this truth. He understood that the pledge which the German Government had made was only a conditional one; that the submarine campaign had been suspended only for the purpose of giving the United States a breathing spell during which it could persuade Great Britain and France to make peace.

"I repeat my proposal," Bernstorff cabled his government on April 26,¹ "to suspend the submarine war at least for the period of negotiations. This would remove all danger of a breach [with the United States] and also enable Wilson to continue his labours in his great plan of bringing about a peace based upon the freedom of the seas—i. e., that for the future trade shall be free from all interference in time of war. According to the assurances which Wilson, through House, has given me, he would in that case take in hand measures directly against England. He is, however, of the opinion that it would be easier to bring about peace than to cause England to abandon the blockade. This last could only be brought about by war and it is well known that the means of war are lacking here. A prohibition of exports as a weapon against the blockade is not possible as the prevailing prosperity would suffer by it.

"The inquiries made by House have led Wilson to believe that our enemies would not be unwilling to consider peace. In view of the present condition of affairs, I repeat that there is only one possible course, namely, that Your Excellency [Von Jagow] empower me to declare that we will enter into negotiations with the United States touching the conduct of the submarine war while the negotiations are proceeding. This would give us the advantage that the submarine war, being over Mr.

¹This is quoted from a hitherto unpublished despatch of Bernstorff's to Berlin which is found among Page's papers.

Wilson's head, like the sword of Damocles, would compel him at once to take in hand the task of mediation."

This dispatch seems sufficiently to explain all the happenings of the summer and winter of 1916-1917. It was sent to Berlin on April 26th; the German Government gave the *Sussex* "pledge" on May 4th, eight days afterward. In this reply Germany declared that she would now expect Mr. Wilson to bring pressure upon Great Britain to secure a mitigation or suspension of the British blockade, and to this Mr. Wilson promptly and energetically replied that he regarded the German promise as an unconditional one and that the Government of the United States "cannot for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single not joint; absolute not relative."

This reply gave satisfaction to both the United States and the countries of the Allies, and Page himself regarded it as a master stroke. "The more I think of it," he wrote on May 17th, "the better the strategy of the President appears, in his latest (and last) note to Germany. They laid a trap for him and he caught them in their own trap. The Germans had tried to 'put it up' to the President to commit the first unfriendly act. He now 'puts it up' to them. And this is at last bound to end the controversy if they sink another ship unlawfully. The French see this clearly and so do the best English, and it has produced a most favourable impression. The future? The German angling for peace will prove futile. They'll have another fit of fury. Whether they will again become

reckless or commit 'mistakes' with their submarines will depend partly on their fury, partly on their fear to make a breach with the United States, but mainly on the state of their submarine fleet. How many have the English caught and destroyed? That's the main question, after all. The English view may not be fair to them. But nobody here believes that they will long abstain from the luxury of crime."

It is thus apparent that when the Germans practically demanded, as a price of their abstention from indiscriminate submarine warfare, that Mr. Wilson should move against Great Britain in the matter of the blockade, they realized the futility of any such step, and that what they really expected to obtain was the presidential mediation for peace. President Wilson at once began to move in this direction. On May 27th, three weeks after the *Sussex* "pledge," he made an address in Washington before the League to Enforce Peace, which was intended to lay the basis for his approaching negotiations. It was in this speech that he made the statement that the United States was "not concerned with the causes and the objects" of the war. "The obscure fountains from which its stupendous flood has burst forth we are not interested to search for or to explain." This was another of those unfortunate sentences which made the President such an unsympathetic figure in the estimation of the Allies and seemed to indicate to them that he had no appreciation of the nature of the struggle. Though this attitude of non-partisanship, of equal balance between the accusations of the Allies and Germany, was intended to make the President acceptable as a mediator, the practical result was exactly the reverse, for Allied statesmen turned from Wilson as soon as those sentences appeared in print. The fact that this same oration specified the "freedom of

the seas" as one of the foundation rocks of the proposed new settlement only accentuated this unfavourable attitude.

This then was clearly the "atmosphere" which prevailed in Washington at the time that Page was summoned home. But Page's letters of this period indicate how little sympathy he entertained for such negotiations. "It is quite apparent," he had recently written to Colonel House, "that nobody in Washington understands the war. Come over and find out." Extracts from a letter which he wrote to his brother, Mr. Henry A. Page, of Aberdeen, North Carolina, are especially interesting when placed side by side with the President's statements of this particular time. These passages show that a two years' close observation of the Prussians in action had not changed Page's opinion of their motives or of their methods; in 1916, as in 1914, Page could see in this struggle nothing but a colossal buccaneering expedition on the part of Germany. "As I look at it," he wrote, "our dilly-dallying is likely to get us into war. The Germans want somebody to rob—to pay their great military bills. They've robbed Belgium and are still robbing it of every penny they can lay their hands on. They robbed Poland and Serbia—two very poor countries which didn't have much. They set out to rob France and have so far been stopped from getting to Paris. If they got to Paris there wouldn't be thirty cents' worth of movable property there in a week, and they'd levy fines of millions of francs a day. Their military scheme and teaching and open purpose is to make somebody pay for their vast military outlay of the last forty years. They must do that or go bankrupt. Now it looks as if they would go bankrupt. But in a little while they may be able to bombard New York and demand

billions of dollars to refrain from destroying the city. That's the richest place left to spoil.

"Now they say that—quite openly and quite frankly. Now if we keep 'neutral' to a highwayman—what do we get for our pains? That's the mistake we are making. If we had sent Bernstorff home the day after the *Lusitania* was sunk and recalled Gerard and begun to train an army we'd have had no more trouble with them. But since they have found out that they can keep us discussing things forever and a day, they will keep us discussing things till they are ready. We are very simple; and we'll get shot for it yet. . . .

"The prestige and fear of the United States has gone down, down, down—disappeared; and we are regarded as 'discussors,' incapable of action, scared to death of war. That's all the invitation that robbers, whose chief business is war, want—all the invitation they need. These devils are out for robbery—and you don't seem to believe it in the United States: that's the queer thing. This neutrality business makes us an easy mark. As soon as they took a town in Belgium, they asked for all the money in the town, all the food, all the movable property; and they've levied a tax every month since on every town and made the town government borrow the money to pay it. If a child in a town makes a disrespectful remark, they fine the town an extra \$1,000. They haven't got enough so far to keep them going flush; and they won't unless they get Paris—which they can't do now. If they got London, they'd be rich; they wouldn't leave a shilling and they'd make all the rich English get all the money they own abroad. This is the reason that Frenchmen and Englishmen prefer to be killed by the 100,000. In the country over which their army has passed a crow would die of starvation and no human being has ten cents of real

money. The Belgian Commission is spending more than 100 million dollars a year to keep the Belgians alive—only because they are robbed every day. They have a rich country and could support themselves but for these robbers. That's the meaning of the whole thing. And yet we treat them as if they were honourable people. It's only a question of time and of power when they will attack us, or the Canal, or South America. Everybody on this side the world knows that. And they are 'yielding' to keep us out of this war so that England will not help us when they (the Germans) get ready to attack America.

"There is the strangest infatuation in the United States with Peace—the strangest illusion about our safety without preparation."

Several letters to Colonel House show the state of the British mind on the subject of the President's peace proposals:

To Edward M. House

Royal Bath and East Cliff Hotel,
Bournemouth,

23 May, 1916.

DEAR HOUSE:

The motor trip that the Houses, the Wallaces, and the Pages took about a year ago was the last trip (three days) that I had had out of London; and I'd got pretty tired. The *China* case having been settled (and settled as we wanted it), I thought it a good time to try to get away for a week. So here Mrs. Page and I are—very much to my benefit. I've spent a beautiful week out of doors, on this seashore; and I have only about ten per cent. of the fatal diseases that I had a week ago. That is to say, I'm as sound as a dollar and feel like a fighting cock.

Sir Edward was fine about the *China*¹ case. He never disputed the principle of the inviolability of American ships on the high seas; but the Admiralty maintained that some of these men are officers in the German Army and are now receiving officers' pay. I think that that is probably true. Nevertheless, the Admiralty had bungled the case badly and Sir Edward simply rode over them. They have a fine quarrel among themselves and we got all we wanted and asked for.

Of course, I can't make out the Germans but I am afraid some huge deviltry is yet coming. When the English say that the Germans must give up their militarism, I doubt if the Germans yet know what they mean. They talk about conquered territory—Belgium, Poland, and the rest. It hasn't entered their heads that they've got to give up their armies and their military system. When this does get into their heads, if it ever do, I think they may so swell with rage at this "insult" that they may break loose in one last desperate effort, ignoring the United States, defying the universe, running amuck. Of course it would be foolhardy to predict this, but the fear of it keeps coming into my mind. The fear is the more persistent because, if the worst comes to them, the military caste and perhaps the dynasty itself will prefer to die in one last terrific onslaught rather than to make a peace on terms which will require the practical extinction of their supreme power. This, I conceive, is the really great danger that yet awaits the world—if the Allies hold together till defeat and famine drive the Germans to the utmost desperation.

In the meantime, the Allies still holding together as

¹The *China* case was a kind of *Trent* case reversed. In 1861 the American ship *San Jacinto* stopped the British vessel *Trent* and took off Mason and Slidell, Confederate commissioners to Great Britain. Similarly a British ship, in 1916, stopped an American ship, the *China*, and removed several German subjects. As the British quickly saw the analogy, and made suitable amends, the old excitement over the *Trent* was not duplicated in the recent war.

they are, there's no peace yet in the British and French minds. They're after the militarism of Prussia—not territory or other gains; and they seem likely to get it, as much by the blockade as by victories on land. Do you remember how in the Franco-Prussian War, Bismarck refused to deal with the French Emperor? He demanded that representatives of the French people should deal with him. He got what he asked for and that was the last of the French Emperor. Neither the French nor the English have forgotten that. You will recall that the Germans starved Paris into submission. Neither the French nor the English have forgotten that. These two leaves out of the Germans' own book of forty-five years ago—these two and no more—*may* be forced on the Germans themselves. They are both quite legitimate, too. You can read a recollection of both these events between the lines of the interviews that Sir Edward and Mr. Balfour recently gave to American newspapers.

There is nothing but admiration here for the strategy of the President's last note to Germany. That was the cleverest play made by anybody since the war began—clever beyond praise. Now he's "got 'em." But nobody here doubts that they will say, sooner or later, that the United States, not having forced the breaking of the British blockade, has not kept its bargain—that's what they'll say—and it is in order again to run amuck. This is what the English think—provided the Germans have enough submarines left to keep up real damage. By that time, too, it will be clear to the Germans that the President can't bring peace so long as only one side wishes peace. The Germans seem to have counted much on the Irish uprising, which came to pass at all only because of the customary English stupid bungling; and the net result has been only to put the mass of the Irish on their mettle to

show that they are not Sinn Feiners. The final upshot will be to strengthen the British Army. God surely is good to this bungling British Government. Wind and wave and the will of High Heaven seem to work for them. I begin to understand their stupidity and their arrogance. If your enemies are such fools in psychological tactics and Heaven is with you, why take the trouble to be alert? And why be modest? Whatever the reason, these English are now more cocky and confident than they've been before since the war began. They are beginning to see results. The only question seems to be to hold the Allies together, and they seem to be doing that. In fact, the battle of Verdun has cemented them. They now have visible proof that the German Army is on the wane. And they have trustworthy evidence that the blockade is telling severely on the Germans. Nobody, I think, expects to thrash 'em to a frazzle; but the almost universal opinion here is that the hold of militarism will be shaken loose. And the German High Canal Navy—what's to become of that? Von Tirpitz is down and out, but there are thousands of Germans, I hear, who complain of their naval inactivity. But God only knows the future—I don't. I think that I do well if I keep track of the present. . . .

My kindest regards to Mrs. House,

Yours very heartily,

W. H. P.

To Edward M. House

London, 25 May, 1916.

DEAR HOUSE:

No utterance by anybody has so stirred the people of this kingdom for many months as Sir Edward Grey's impromptu speech last night in the House of Commons

about Peace, when he called the German Chancellor a first-class liar. I sent you to-day a clipping from one of the morning papers. Every paper I pick up compliments Sir Edward. Everyone says, "We must fight to a finish." The more sensational press intimates that any Englishman who uses the word "peace" ought to be shot. You have never seen such a rally as that which has taken place in response to Sir Edward's cry. In the first place, as you know, he is the 'most gentle of all the Cabinet, the last man to get on a "war-rampage," the least belligerent and rambunctious of the whole lot. When he felt moved to say that there can be no peace till the German military despotism is broken, everybody from one end of the Kingdom to the other seems to have thrown up his hat and applauded. Except the half-dozen peace-cranks in the House (Bryan sort of men) you can't find a man, woman, child, or dog that isn't fired with the determination to see the war through. The continued talk about peace which is reported directly and indirectly from Germany—coming from Switzerland, from Rome, from Washington—has made the English and the French very angry: no, "angry" isn't quite the right word. It has made them very determined. They feel insulted by the impudence of the Germans, who, since they know they are bound to lose, seem to be turning heaven and earth to induce neutrals to take their view of peace. People are asking here, "If they are victorious, why doesn't their fleet come out of the canal and take the seas, and again open their commerce? Why do they whimper about the blockade when they will not even risk a warship to break it?" You'll recall how the talk here used to be that the English wouldn't wake up. You wouldn't know 'em now. Your bulldog has got his grip and even thunder doesn't disturb him.

Incidentally, all the old criticism of Sir Edward Grey seems to have been forgotten. You hear nothing but praise of him now. I am told that he spoke his impromptu speech last night with great fire and at once left the House. His speech has caused a greater stir than the Irish rebellion, showing that every Englishman feels that Sir Edward said precisely what every man feels.

The Germans have apparently overdone and overworked their premature peace efforts and have made things worse for them. They've overplayed their hand.

In fact, I see no end of the war. The Allies are not going to quit prematurely. They won't even discuss the subject yet with one another, and the Germans, by their peace-talk of the sort that they inspire, simply postpone the day when the Allies will take the subject up.

All the while, too, the Allies work closer and closer together. They'll soon be doing even their diplomatic work with neutrals, as a unit—England and France as one nation, and (on great subjects) Russia and Italy also with them.

I've talked lately not only with Sir Edward but with nearly half the other members of the Cabinet, and they are all keyed up to the same tune. The press of both parties, too, are (for once) wholly agreed: Liberal and Conservative papers alike hold the same war-creed.

Sincerely yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

Before leaving for Washington Page discussed the situation personally with Sir Edward Grey and Lord Bryce. He has left memoranda of both interviews.

Notes of a Private and Informal Conversation with Sir Edward Grey, at his residence, on July 27, 1916, when I called to say good-bye before sailing on leave to the United States

. . . Sir Edward Grey went on to say quite frankly that two thoughts expressed in a speech by the President some months ago had had a very serious influence on British opinion. One thought was that the causes or objects of the war were of no concern to him, and the other was his (at least implied) endorsement of "the freedom of the seas," which the President did not define.

Concerning the first thought, he understood of course that a neutral President could not say that he favoured one side or the other: everybody understood that and nobody expected him to take sides. But when the President said that the objects of the war did not concern him, that was taken by British public opinion as meaning a condemnation of the British cause, and it produced deep feeling.

Concerning the "freedom of the seas," he believed that the first use of the phrase was made by Colonel House (on his return from one of his visits to Berlin),¹ but the public now regarded it as a German invention and it meant to the British mind a policy which would render British supremacy at sea of little value in time of war; and public opinion resented this. He knew perfectly well that at a convenient time new rules must be made governing the conduct of war at sea and on the land, too. But the German idea of "the freedom of the seas" ("freedom" was needed on land also) is repulsive to the British mind.

He mentioned these things because they had produced

¹See Chapter XIII, page 434.

in many minds an unwillingness, he feared, to use the good offices of the President whenever any mediatorial service might be done by a neutral. The tendency of these remarks was certainly in that direction. Yet Sir Edward carefully abstained from expressing such an unwillingness on his own part, and the inference from his tone and manner, as well as from his habitual attitude, is that he feels no unwillingness to use the President's good office, if occasion should arise.

I asked what he meant by "mediatorial"—the President's offering his services or good offices on his own initiative? He said—No, not that. But the Germans might express to the President their willingness or even their definite wish to have an armistice, on certain terms, to discuss conditions of peace coupled with an intimation that he might sound the Allies. He did not expect the President to act on his own initiative, but at the request or at least at the suggestion of the German Government, he might conceivably sound the Allies—especially, he added, "since I am informed that the notion is wide-spread in America that the war will end inconclusively—as a draw." He smiled and remarked, as an aside, that he didn't think that this notion was held by any considerable group of people in any other country, certainly not in Great Britain.

In further talk on this subject he said that none of the Allies could mention peace or discuss peace till France should express such a wish; for it is the very vitals of France that have received and are receiving the shock of such an assault as was never before launched against any nation. Unless France was ready to quit, none of France's Allies could mention peace, and France showed no mood to quit. Least of all could the English make or receive any such suggestion at least till her new great army

had done its best; for until lately the severest fighting had not been done by the British, whose army had practically been held in reserve. There had for a long time been a perfect understanding between Joffre and Haig—that the English would wait to begin their offensive till the moment arrived when it best suited the French.

The impression that I got from this part of the conversation was that Sir Edward hoped that I might convey to the President (as, of course, he could not) Sir Edward's idea of the effect of these parts of the President's speech on feeling in England toward him. Nowhere in the conversation did he make any request of me. Any one, overhearing it, might have supposed it to be a conversation between two men, with no object beyond expressing their views. But, of course, he hoped and meant that I should, in my own way, make known to the President what he said. He did not say that the President's good offices, when the time should come, would be unwelcome to him or to his government; and he meant, I am sure, to convey only the fear that by these assertions the President had planted an objection to his good offices in a large section of British opinion.

Among the conditions of peace that Sir Edward himself personally would like to see imposed (he had not yet discussed the subject with any of his colleagues in the Government) was this: that the German Government should agree to submit to an impartial (neutral) commission or court the question, Who began the war and who is responsible for it? The German Chancellor and other high German officials have put it about and continue to put it about that England is responsible, and doubtless the German people at least believe it. All the governments concerned must (this is his idea) submit to the tribunal all its documents and other evidence bearing on

the subject; and of course the finding of the tribunal must be published.

Then he talked a good deal about the idea that lies behind the League for Enforcing Peace—in a sympathetic mood. He went on to point out how such a league—with force behind it—would at any one of three stages have prevented this war—(1) When England proposed a conference to France, Germany, Italy, and Russia, all agreed to it but Germany. Germany alone prevented a discussion. If the League to Enforce Peace had included England, France, Italy, and Russia—there would have been no war; for Germany would have seen at once that they would all be against her. (2) Later, when the Czar sent the Kaiser a personal telegram proposing to submit their differences to some tribunal, a League to Enforce Peace would have prevented war. And (3) when the question of the invasion of Belgium came up, every signatory to the treaty guaranteeing Belgium's integrity gave assurance of keeping the treaty—but Germany, and Germany gave an evasive answer. A league would again have prevented a war—or put all the military force of all its members against Germany.

Throughout the conversation, which lasted about an hour, Sir Edward said more than once, as he has often said to me, that he hoped we should be able to keep the friction between our governments at the minimum. He would regard it as the greatest calamity if the ill-feeling that various events have stirred up in sections of public opinion on each side should increase or should become permanent. His constant wish and effort were to lessen and if possible to remove all misunderstandings.

Lord Bryce was one of the Englishmen with whom Page was especially inclined to discuss pending problems.

*Notes on a conversation with Lord Bryce,
July 31, 1916*

Lord Bryce spoke of the President's declaration that we were not concerned with the causes or objects of the war and he said that that remark had caused much talk—all, as he thought, on a misunderstanding of Mr. Wilson's meaning. "He meant, I take it, only that he did not propose at that time to discuss the causes or the objects of the war; and it is a pity that his sentence was capable of being interpreted to mean something else; and the sentence was published and discussed here apart from its context—a most unfair proceeding. I can imagine that the President and his friends may be much annoyed by this improper interpretation."

I remarked that the body of the speech in which this remark occurred might have been written in Downing Street, so friendly was it to the Allies.

"Quite, quite," said he.

This was at dinner, Lady Bryce and Mrs. Page and he and I only being present.

When he and I went into the library he talked more than an hour.

"And what about this blacklist?" he asked. I told him. He had been in France for a week and did not know just what had been done. He said that that seemed to him a mistake. "The Government doesn't know America—neither does the British public. Neither does the American Government (*no* American government) know the British. Hence your government writes too many notes—all governments are likely to write too many notes. Everybody gets tired of seeing them and they lose their effect."

He mentioned the blockade and said that it had be-

come quite effective—wonderfully effective, in fact; and he implied that he did not see why we now failed to recognize it. Our refusal to recognize it had caused and doubtless is now causing such ill-feeling as exists in England.

Then he talked long about peace and how it would probably be arranged. He judged, from letters that he receives from the United States as well as from Americans who come over here, that there was an expectation in America that the President would be called in at the peace settlement and that some persons even expected him to offer mediation. He did not see how that could be. He knew no precedent for such a proceeding. The President might, of course, on the definite request of either side, make a definite inquiry of the other side; but such a course would be, in effect, merely the transmission of an inquiry.

But after peace was made and the time came to set up a League for Enforcing Peace, or some such machinery, of course the United States would be and would have to be a party to that if it were to succeed. He reminded me that a little group of men here, of whom he was one, early in the war sketched substantially the same plan that the American League to Enforce Peace has worked out. It had not seemed advisable to have any general public discussion of it in England till the war should end: nobody had time now to give to it.

As he knew no precedent for belligerents to call in a third party when they met to end a war, so he knew no precedent for any outside government to protest against the invasion of a country by a Power that had signed a treaty to guarantee the integrity of the invaded country—no precedent, that is to say, for the United States to protest against the invasion of Belgium. "That precedent," I said, "was found in Hysteria."

Lord Bryce, who had just returned from a visit to the British headquarters in France, hardly dared hope for the end of the war till next year; and the intervening time between now and the end would be a time, he feared, of renewed atrocities and increasing hatred. He cited the killing of Captain Fryatt of the *Brussels* and the forcible deportation of young women from Lille and other towns in the provinces of France occupied by the Germans.

The most definite idea that he had touching American-British relations was the fear that the anti-British feeling in the United States would become stronger and would outlast the war. "It is organized," he said. "The disaffected Germans and the disaffected Irish are interested in keeping it up." He asked what effect I thought the Presidential campaign would have on this feeling. He seemed to have a fear that somehow the campaign would give an occasion for stirring it up even more.

"Good-bye. Give my regards to all my American friends; and I'm proud to say there are a good many of them."

One episode that was greatly stirring both Great Britain and the United States at this time was the trial of Sir Roger Casement, the Irish leader who had left Wilhelms-haven for Ireland in a German submarine and who had been captured at Tralee in the act of landing arms and munitions for an Irish insurrection. Casement's subsequent trial and conviction on a charge of high treason had inspired a movement in his favour from Irish-Americans, the final outcome of which was that the Senate, in early August, passed a resolution asking the British Government for clemency and stipulating that this resolution should be presented to the Foreign Office. Page was then on the ocean bound for the United States and

the delicate task of presenting this document to Sir Edward Grey fell upon Mr. Laughlin, who was now Chargé d'affaires. Mr. Laughlin is a diplomat of great experience, but this responsibility at first seemed to be something of a poser even for him. He had received explicit instructions from Washington to present this resolution, and the one thing above all which a diplomatic officer must do is to carry out the orders of his government, but Mr. Laughlin well knew that, should he present this paper in the usual manner, the Foreign Secretary might decline to receive it; he might regard it as an interference with matters that exclusively concerned the sovereign state. Mr. Laughlin, however, has a technique all his own, and, in accordance with this, he asked for an interview with Sir Edward Grey to discuss a matter of routine business. However, the Chargé d'affaires carried the Casement resolution tucked away in an inside pocket when he made his call.

Like Mr. Page, Mr. Laughlin was on the friendliest terms with Sir Edward Grey, and, after the particular piece of business had been transacted, the two men, as usual, fell into casual conversation. Casement then loomed large in the daily press, and the activities of the American Senate had likewise caused some commotion in London. In round-about fashion Mr. Laughlin was able to lead Sir Edward to make some reference to the Casement case.

"I see the Senate has passed a resolution asking clemency," said the Foreign Secretary—exactly the remark which the American wished to elicit.

"Yes," was the reply. "By the way, I happen to have a copy of the resolution with me. May I give it to you?"

"Yes, I should like to have it."

The Foreign Secretary read it over with deliberation.

"This is a very interesting document," he said, when he

had finished. "Would you have any objection if I showed it to the Prime Minister?"

Of course that was precisely what Mr. Laughlin did wish, and he replied that this was the desire of his government. The purpose of his visit had been accomplished, and he was able to cable Washington that its instructions had been carried out and that the Casement resolution had been presented to the British Government. Simultaneously with his communication, however, he reported also that the execution of Roger Casement had taken place. In fact, it was being carried out at the time of the interview. This incident lends point to Page's memorandum of the last interview which he had before leaving England.

August 1st. I lunched with Mr. Asquith. One does not usually bring away much from his conversations, and he did not say much to-day worth recording. But he showed a very eager interest in the Presidential campaign, and he confessed that he felt some anxiety about the anti-British feeling in the United States. This led him to tell me that he could not in good conscience interfere with Casement's execution, in spite of the shoals of telegrams that he was receiving from the United States. This man, said he, visited Irish prisoners in German camps and tried to seduce them to take up arms against Great Britain—their own country. When they refused, the Germans removed them to the worst places in their Empire and, as a result, some of them died. Then Casement came to Ireland in a German man-of-war (a submarine) accompanied by a ship loaded with guns. "In all good conscience to my country and to my responsibilities I cannot interfere." He hoped that thoughtful opinion in the United States would see this whole matter in a fair and just way.

I asked him about anti-American feeling in Great Brit-

air. He said: "Do not let that unduly disturb you. At bottom we understand you. At bottom the two people surely understand one another and have unbreakable bonds of sympathy. No serious breach is conceivable." He went on quite earnestly: "Mr. Page, after any policy or plan is thought out on its merits my next thought always is how it may affect our relations with the United States. That is always a fundamental consideration."

I ventured to say that if he would keep our relations smooth on the surface, I'd guarantee their stability at the bottom. It's the surface that rolls high at times, and the danger is there. Keep the surface smooth and the bottom will take care of itself.

Then he asked about Mexico, as he usually has when I have talked with him. I gave him as good a report as I could, reminding him of the great change in the attitude of all Latin-America caused by the President's patient policy with Mexico. When he said, "Mexico is a bad problem," I couldn't resist the impulse to reply: "When Mexico troubles you, think of—Ireland. As there are persons in England who concern themselves with Mexico, so there are persons in the United States who concern themselves about Ireland. Ireland and Mexico have each given trouble for two centuries. Yet these people talk about them as if they could remove all trouble in a month."

"Quite true," he said, and smiled himself into silence. Then he talked about more or less frivolous subjects; and, as always, he asked about Mr. Bryan and Mr. Roosevelt, "alike now, I suppose, in their present obscure plight." I told him I was going from his house to the House of Lords to see Sir Edward Grey metamorphosed into Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

"The very stupidest of the many stupid ceremonies that we have," said he—very truly.

He spoke of my "onerous duties" and so on and so on—tut, tut! talk that gets nowhere. But he did say, quite sincerely, I think, that my frankness called forth frankness and avoided misunderstanding; for he has said that to other people about me.

Such is the Prime Minister of Great Britain in this supreme crisis in English history, a remarkable man, of an abnormally quick mind, pretty nearly a great man, but now a spent force, at once nimble and weary. History may call him Great. If it do, he will owe this judgment to the war, with the conduct of which his name will be forever associated.

II

Mr. and Mrs. Page's homecoming was a tragedy. They sailed from Liverpool on August 3rd, and reached New York on the evening of August 11th. But sad news awaited them upon the dock. About two months previously their youngest son, Frank, had been married to Miss Katherine Sefton, of Auburn, N. Y., and the young couple had settled down in Garden City, Long Island. That was the summer when the epidemic of infantile paralysis swept over the larger part of the United States. The young bride was stricken; the case was unusually rapid and unusually severe; at the moment of the Pages' arrival, they were informed that there was practically no hope; and Mrs. Frank Page died at two o'clock on the afternoon of the following day. The Pages had always been a particularly united and happy family; this was the first time that they had suffered from any domestic sorrow of this kind, and the Ambassador was so affected that it was with difficulty that he could summon himself for the task that lay ahead.

In a few days, however, he left for Washington. He has

himself described his experience at the Capital in words that must inevitably take their place in history. To appreciate properly the picture which Page gives, it must be remembered that the city and the officialdom which he portrays are the same city and the same men who six months afterward declared war on Germany. When Page reached Washington, the Presidential campaign was in full swing, with Mr. Wilson as the Democratic candidate and Mr. Charles E. Hughes as the Republican. But another crisis was absorbing the nation's attention: the railway unions, comprising practically all the 2,000,000 railway employees in the United States, were threatening to strike—ostensibly for an eight-hour day, in reality for higher wages.

*Mr. Page's memorandum of his visit to Washington
in August, 1916*

The President was very courteous to me, in his way. He invited me to luncheon the day after I arrived. Present: the President, Mrs. Wilson, Miss Bones, Tom Bolling, his brother-in-law, and I. The conversation was general and in the main jocular. Not a word about England, not a word about a foreign policy or foreign relations.

He explained that the threatened railway strike engaged his whole mind. I asked to have a talk with him when his mind should be free. Would I not go off and rest and come back?—I preferred to do my minor errands with the Department, but I should hold myself at his convenience and at his command.

Two weeks passed. Another invitation to lunch. Sharp, the Ambassador to France, had arrived. He, too, was invited. Present: the President, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs.

Wallace, the Misses Smith of New Orleans, Miss Bones, Sharp, and I. Not one word about foreign affairs.

After luncheon, the whole party drove to the Capitol, where the President addressed Congress on the strike, proposing legislation to prevent it and to forestall similar strikes. It is a simple ceremony and somewhat impressive. The Senators occupy the front seats in the House, the Speaker presides and the President of the Senate sits on his right. An escorting committee is sent out to bring the President in. He walks to the clerk's or reader's desk below the presiding officer's, turns and shakes hands with them both and then proceeds to read his speech, very clearly and audibly. Some passages were applauded. When he had done, he again shook hands with the presiding officer and went out, preceded and followed by the White House escort. I sat in the Presidential (or diplomatic?) gallery with the White House party, higgledy-piggledy.

The speech ended, the President drove to the White House with his escort in his car. The crowds in the corridors and about the doors waited and crowded to see Mrs. Wilson, quite respectful but without order or discipline. We had to push our way through them. Now and then a policeman at a distance would yell loudly, "Make way there!"

When we reached the White House, I asked the door-man if the President had arrived.

"Yes."

"Does he expect me to go in and say good-bye?"

"No."

Thus he had no idea of talking with me now, if ever. Not at lunch nor after did he suggest a conversation about American-British affairs or say anything about my seeing him again.

This threatened strike does hold his whole mind—

bothers him greatly. It seems doubtful if he can avert a general strike. The Republicans are trying "to put him in a political hole," and they say he, too, is playing politics. Whoever be to blame for it, it is true that politics is in the game. Nobody seems to foresee who will make capital out of it. Surely I can't.

There's no social sense at the White House. The President has at his table family connections only—and they say few or no distinguished men and women are invited, except the regular notables at the set dinners—the diplomatic, the judiciary, and the like. His table is his private family affair—nothing more. It is very hard to understand why so intellectual a man doesn't have notable men about him. It's the college professor's village habit, I dare say. But it's a great misfortune. This is one way in which Mr. Wilson shuts out the world and lives too much alone, feeding only on knowledge and subjects that he has already acquired and not getting new views or fresh suggestions from men and women.

He sees almost nobody except members of Congress for whom he sends for special conferences, and he usually sees these in his office. The railroad presidents and men he met in formal conference—no social touch.

A member of his Cabinet told me that Mr. Wilson had shown confidence in him, given him a wide range of action in his own Department and that he relies on his judgment. This Cabinet member of course attends the routine state dinners and receptions, as a matter of required duty. But as for any social recognition of his existence—he had never received a hint or nod. Nor does any member of the Cabinet (except, no doubt, Mr. McAdoo, his son-in-law). There is no social sense nor reason in this. In fact, it works to a very decided disadvantage to the President and to the Nation.

By the way, that a notable man in our educational life could form such a habit does not speak well for our educational life.

What an unspeakably lamentable loss of opportunity! This is the more remarkable and lamentable because the President is a charming personality, an uncommonly good talker, a man who could easily make personal friends of all the world. He does his own thinking, untouched by other men's ideas. He receives nothing from the outside. His domestic life is spent with his own, nobody else, except House occasionally. His contact with his own Cabinet is a business man's contact with his business associates and kind—at his office.

He declined to see Cameron Forbes¹ on his return from the Philippines.

The sadness of this mistake!

Another result is—the President doesn't hear the frank truth about the men about him. He gives nobody a chance to tell him. Hence he has several heavy encumbrances in his official family.

The influence of this lone-hand way of playing the game extends very far. The members of the Cabinet do not seem to have the habit of frankness with one another. Each lives and works in a water-tight compartment. I sat at luncheon (at a hotel) with Lansing, Secretary of State; Lane, Secretary of the Interior; Gregory, Attorney-General; Baker, Secretary of War; Daniels, Secretary of the Navy; and Sharp, Ambassador to France; and all the talk was jocular or semi-jocular, and personal—mere cheap chaff. Not a question was asked either of the Ambassador to France or of the Ambassador to Great Britain about the war or about our foreign relations. The

¹Mr. Forbes had been Governor-General of the Philippines from 1909 to 1913. His work had been extraordinarily successful.

war wasn't mentioned. Sharp and I might have come from Bungtown and Jonesville and not from France and England. We were not encouraged to talk—the local personal joke held the time and conversation. This astounding fact must be the result of this lone-hand, watertight compartment method and—of the neutrality suppression of men. The Vice-President confessed to his neighbour at a Gridiron dinner that he had read none of the White Papers, or Orange Papers, etc., of the belligerent governments—confessed this with pride—lest he should form an opinion and cease to be neutral! Miss X, a member of the President's household, said to Mrs. Y, the day we lunched there, that she had made a remark privately to Sharp showing her admiration of the French.

“Was that a violation of neutrality?” she asked in all seriousness.

I can see it in no other way but this: the President suppressed free thought and free speech when he insisted upon personal neutrality. He held back the deliberate and spontaneous thought and speech of the people except the pro-Germans, who saw their chance and improved it! The mass of the American people found themselves forbidden to think or talk, and this forbidding had a sufficient effect to make them take refuge in indifference. It's the President's job. He's our leader. He'll attend to this matter. We must not embarrass him. On this easy cushion of non-responsibility the great masses fell back at their intellectual and moral ease—softened, isolated, lulled.

That wasn't leadership in a democracy. Right here is the President's vast failure. From it there is now no escape unless the Germans commit more submarine crimes. They have kept the United States for their own exploiting after the war. They have thus had a real triumph of us.

I have talked in Washington with few men who showed any clear conception of the difference between the Germans and the British. To the minds of these people and high Government officials, German and English are alike foreign nations who are now foolishly engaged in war. Two of the men who look upon the thing differently are Houston¹ and Logan Waller Page.² In fact, there is no realization of the war in Washington. Secretary Houston has a proper perspective of the situation. He would have done precisely what I recommended—paved the way for claims and let the English take their course. “International law” is no strict code and it’s all shot to pieces anyhow.

The Secretary [of State] betrayed not the slightest curiosity about our relations with Great Britain. I saw him several times—(1) in his office; (2) at his house; (3) at the French Ambassador’s; (4) at Wallace’s; (5) at his office; (6) at Crozier’s³—this during my first stay in Washington. The only remark he made was that I’d find a different atmosphere in Washington from the atmosphere in London. Truly. All the rest of his talk was about “cases.” Would I see Senator Owen? Would I see Congressman Sherley? Would I take up this “case” and that? His mind ran on “cases.”

Well, at Y’s, when I was almost in despair, I rammed down him a sort of general statement of the situation as I saw it; at least, I made a start. But soon he stopped me and ran off at a tangent on some historical statement I had made, showing that his mind was not at all on the real subject, the large subject. When I returned to Washington, and he had read my interviews with Grey, Asquith,

¹Secretary of Agriculture.

²In charge of government road building, a distant relative of the Ambassador.

³Major General William Crozier, U. S. A., Chief of Ordnance.

and Bryce,¹ and my own statement, he still said nothing, but he ceased to talk of "cases." At my final interview he said that he had had difficulty in preventing Congress from making the retaliatory resolution mandatory. He had tried to keep it back till the very end of the session, etc.

This does not quite correspond with what the President told me—that the State Department asked for this retaliatory resolution.

I made specific suggestions in my statement to the President and to Lansing. They have (yet) said nothing about them. I fancy they will not. I have found nowhere any policy—only "cases."

I proposed to Baker and Daniels that they send a General and an Admiral as attachés to London. They both agreed. Daniels later told me that Baker mentioned it to the President and he "stepped on the suggestion with both feet." I did not bring it up. In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, both General McClellan (or Sheridan?²) and General Forsythe were sent to the German Army. Our military ideas have shrunk since then!

I find at this date (a month before the Presidential election), the greatest tangle and uncertainty of political opinion that I have ever observed in our country. The President, in spite of his unparalleled leadership and authority in domestic policy, is by no means certain of election. He has the open hostility of the Germans—all very well, if he had got the fruits of a real hostility to them; but they have, in many ways, directed his foreign policy. He has lost the silent confidence of many men upon whose conscience this great question weighs heavily. If he be defeated he will owe his defeat to the loss of con-

¹See Chapter XIX, pages 160-164.

²It was General Sheridan.

fidence in his leadership on this great subject. His opponent has put forth no clear-cut opinion. He plays a silent game on the German "issue." Yet he will command the support of many patriotic men merely as a lack of confidence in the President.

Nor do I see any end of the results of this fundamental error. In the economic and political readjustment of the world we shall be "out of the game," in any event—unless we are yet forced into the war by Hughes's election or by the renewal of the indiscriminate use of submarines by the Germans.

There is a great lesson in this lamentable failure of the President really to lead the Nation. The United States stands for democracy and free opinion as it stands for nothing else and as no other nation stands for it. Now when democracy and free opinion are at stake as they have not before been, we take a "neutral" stand—we throw away our very birthright. We may talk of "humanity" all we like: we have missed the largest chance that ever came to help the large cause that brought us into being as a Nation. . . .

And the people, sitting on the comfortable seats of neutrality upon which the President has pushed them back, are grateful for Peace, not having taken the trouble to think out what Peace has cost us and cost the world—except so many as have felt the uncomfortable stirrings of the national conscience.

There is not a man in our State Department or in our Government who has ever met any prominent statesmen in any European Government—except the third Assistant Secretary of State, who has no authority in forming policies; there is not a man who knows the atmosphere of Europe. Yet when I proposed that one of the under Secretaries should go to England on a visit of a few weeks for obser-

vation, the objection arose that such a visit would not be "neutral."

III

The extraordinary feature of this experience was that Page had been officially summoned home, presumably to discuss the European situation, and that neither the President nor the State Department apparently had the slightest interest in his visit.

"The President," Page wrote to Mr. Laughlin, "dominates the whole show in a most extraordinary way. The men about him (and he sees them only on 'business') are very nearly all very, very small fry, or worse—the narrowest twopenny lot I've ever come across. He has no real companions. Nobody talks to him freely and frankly. I've never known quite such a condition in American life." Perhaps the President had no desire to discuss inconvenient matters with his Ambassador to Great Britain, but Page was certainly determined to have an interview with the President. "I'm not going back to London," he wrote Mr. Laughlin, "till the President has said something to me or at least till I have said something to him. I am now going down to Garden City and New York till the President send for me; or, if he do not send for me, I'm going to his house and sit on his front steps till he come out!" Page had brought from England one of the medals which the Germans had struck in honour of the *Lusitania* sinking, and one reason why he particularly wished to see the President alone was to show him this memento.

Another reason was that in early September Page had received important news from London concerning the move which Germany was making for peace and the attitude of Great Britain in this matter. The several plans which

Germany had had under consideration had now taken the form of a definite determination to ask for an armistice before winter set in. A letter from Mr. Laughlin, Chargé d'affaires in Page's absence, tells the story.

From Irwin Laughlin

Embassy of the United States of America.
London, August 30, 1916.

DEAR MR. PAGE:

For some little time past I have heard persistent rumours, which indeed are more than rumours, since they have come from important sources, of an approaching movement by Germany toward an early armistice. They have been so circumstantial and so closely connected—in prospect—with the President, that I have examined them with particular attention and I shall try to give you the results, and my conclusions, with the recommendation that you take the matter up directly with the President and the Secretary of State. I have been a little at a loss to decide how to communicate what I have learned to the Government in Washington, for the present conditions make it impossible to set down what I want to say in an official despatch, but the fortunate accident of your being in the United States gives me the safe opportunity I want, and so I send my information to you, and by the pouch, as time is of less importance than secrecy.

There seems to be no doubt that Germany is casting about for an opportunity to effect an armistice, if possible before the winter closes in. She hopes it may result in peace—a peace more or less favourable to her, of course—but even if such a result should fail of accomplishment she would have gained a breathing space; have secured an opportunity to improve her strategic position in a military sense, perhaps by shortening her line in Flanders; have

stiffened the resistance of her people; and probably have influenced a certain body of neutral opinion not only in her favour but against her antagonists.

I shall not try to mention the various sources from which the threads that compose this fabric have been drawn, but I finally fastened on X of the Admiralty as a man with whom I could talk profitably and confidentially, and he told me positively that his information showed that Germany was looking in the direction I have indicated, and that she would soon approach the President on the subject—even if she had not already taken the first steps toward preparing her advance to him.

I asked X if he thought it well for me to broach the subject to Lord Grey and he suggested that I first consult Y, which I did. The latter seemed very wary at the outset, but he warmed up at last and in the course of the conversation told me he had reliable information that when Bethmann-Hollweg went to Munich just before the beginning of the allied offensive in the west in June he told the King of Bavaria that he was confident the Allies would be obliged to begin overtures for peace next October; adding that if they didn't Germany would have to do so. The King, it appears, asked him how Germany could approach the Allies if it proved to be advisable and he replied: "Through our good friend Wilson."

I asked Y if the King of Spain's good offices would not be enlisted jointly with those of the President in attempting to arrange an armistice, but he thought not, and said that the King of Spain was very well aware that the Allies would not consider anything short of definite peace proposals from Germany and that His Majesty knew the moment for them had not arrived. I then finally asked him point blank if he thought the Germans would approach the President for an armistice, and, if so, when.

He said he was inclined to think they might do so perhaps about October. On my asking him if he was disposed to let me communicate his opinion privately to the Government in Washington he replied after some hesitation that he had no objection, but he quickly added that I must make it clear at the same time that the British Government would not listen to any such proposals.

These conversations took place during the course of last week, and on Sunday—the 27th—I invited the Spanish Ambassador to luncheon at Tanglew when I was able to get him to confirm what Y had said of his Sovereign's attitude and opinions.

I may mention for what it is worth that on Hoover's last trip to Germany he was told by Bullock, of the Philadelphia *Ledger*, that Zimmermann of the Berlin Foreign Office had told him that the Germans had intended in June to take steps for an armistice which were prevented by the preparations for the allied offensive in the west.

Y was very emphatic in what he said of the attitude of his government and the British people toward continuing the war to an absolutely conclusive end, and I was much impressed. He said among other things that the execution of Captain Fryatt had had a markedly perceptible effect in hardening British public opinion against Germany and fixing the determination to fight to a relentless finish. This corresponds exactly with my own observations.

I leave this letter entirely in your hands. You will know what use to make of it. It is meant as an official communication in everything but the usual form from which I have departed for reasons I need not explain further.

I look forward eagerly to your return,

Very sincerely yours,

IRWIN LAUGHLIN.

Page waited five weeks before he succeeded in obtaining his interview with Mr. Wilson.

To the President

The New Willard, Washington, D. C.

Thursday, September 21, 1916.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

While I am waiting for a convenient time to come when you will see me for a conference and report, I send you notes on conversations with Lord Grey and Lord Bryce.¹ They are, in effect, though of course not in form, messages to you.

The situation between our government and Great Britain seems to me most alarming; and (let me add) easily removable, if I can get the ear of anybody in authority. But I find here only an atmosphere of suspicion—unwarranted by facts and easily dissipated by straight and simple friendly methods. I am sure of this.

I have, besides, a most important and confidential message for you from the British Government which they prefer should be orally delivered.

And I have written out a statement of my own study of the situation and of certain proposals which, I think, if they commend themselves to you, will go far to remove this dangerous tension. I hope to go over them with you at your convenience.

Yours faithfully,

WALTER H. PAGE.

The situation was alarming for more reasons than the determination of Germany to force the peace issue. The State Department was especially irritated at this time

¹See Chapter XIX, pages 160 and 164.

over the blockade. Among the "trade advisers" there was a conviction, which all Page's explanations had not destroyed, that Great Britain was using the blockade as a means of destroying American commerce and securing America's customers for herself. Great Britain's regulations on the blacklist and "bunker coal" had intensified this feeling. In both these latter questions Page regarded the British actions as tactless and unjust; he had had many sharp discussions at the Foreign Office concerning them, but had not made much headway in his efforts to obtain their abandonment. The purpose of the "blacklist" was to strike at neutral firms with German affiliations which were trading with Germany. The Trading with the Enemy Act provided that such firms could not trade with Great Britain; that British vessels must refuse to accept their cargoes, and that any neutral ship which accepted such cargoes would be denied bunker coal at British ports. Under this law the Ministry of Blockade issued a "blacklist" of more than 1,000 proscribed exporting houses in the United States. So great was the indignation against this boycott in the United States that Congress, in early September, had passed a retaliatory act; this gave the President the authority at any time to place an embargo upon the exports to the United States of countries which discriminated against American firms and also to deny clearance to ships which refused to accept American cargoes. The two countries indeed seemed to be hastening toward a crisis.

Page's urgent letter to Mr. Wilson brought a telegram from Mr. Tumulty inviting the Ambassador to spend the next evening and night with the President at Shadow Lawn, the seaside house on the New Jersey coast in which Mr. Wilson was spending the summer. Mr. Wilson received his old friend with great courtesy and listened

quietly and with apparent interest to all that he had to say. The written statement to which Page refers in his letter told the story of Anglo-American relations from the time of the Panama tolls repeal up to the time of Page's visit to Shadow Lawn. Quotations have already been made from it in preceding chapters, and the ideas which it contains have abundantly appeared in letters already printed. The document was an eloquent plea for American coöperation with the Allies—for the dismissal of Bernstorff, for the adoption of a manly attitude toward Germany, and for the vindication of a high type of Americanism.

Page showed the President the *Lusitania* medal, but that did not especially impress him. "The President said to me," wrote Page in reference to this visit, "that when the war began he and all the men he met were in hearty sympathy with the Allies; but that now the sentiment toward England had greatly changed. He saw no one who was not vexed and irritated by the arbitrary English course. That is, I fear, true—that he sees no one but has a complaint. So does the Secretary of State, and the Trade Bureau and all the rest in Washington. But in Boston, in New York, and in the South and in Auburn, N. Y., I saw no one whose sympathy with the Allies had undergone any fundamental change. I saw men who felt vexed at such an act as the blacklist, but that was merely vexation, not a fundamental change of feeling. Of course, there came to see me men who had 'cases.' Now these are the only kind of men, I fear, whom the Government at Washington sees—these and the members of Congress whom the Germans have scared or have 'put up' to scare the Government—who are 'twisting the lion's tail,' in a word."

"The President said," wrote Page immediately after coming from Shadow Lawn, "'Tell those gentlemen for me'—and then followed a homily to the effect that a damage done to any American citizen is a damage to him, etc. He described the war as a result of many causes, some of long origin. He spoke of England's having the earth and of Germany wanting it. Of course, he said, the German system is directly opposed to everything American. But I do not gather that he thought that this carried any very great moral reprehensibility.

"He said that he wouldn't do anything with the retaliatory act till after election lest it might seem that he was playing politics. But he hinted that if there were continued provocation afterward (in case he were elected) he would. He added that one of the worst provocations was the long English delay in answering our Notes. Was this delay due to fear or shame? He evidently felt that such a delay showed contempt. He spoke of the Bryan treaty.¹ But on no question had the British 'locked horns' with us—on no question had they come to a clear issue so that the matter might be referred to the Commission."

Page delivered his oral message about the German determination to obtain an armistice. This was to the effect that Great Britain would not grant it. Page intimated that Britain would be offended if the President proposed it.

"If an armistice, no," answered Mr. Wilson. "That's a military matter and is none of my business. But if they propose an armistice looking toward peace—yes, I shall be glad."

¹The treaty between the United States and Great Britain, adopted through the urgency of Mr. Bryan, providing for the arbitration of disputes between the two countries.

The experience was an exceedingly trying one for both men. The discussion showed how far apart were the President and his Ambassador on practically every issue connected with the crisis. Naturally the President's reference to the causes of the war—that there were many causes, some of them of long persistence, and that Great Britain's domination of the "earth" was one of them—conflicted with the judgment of a man who attributed the origin of the struggle to German aggression. The President's statement that American sympathy for the Allies had now changed to irritation, and the tolerant attitude toward Germany which Mr. Wilson displayed, affected Page with the profoundest discouragement. The President's intimation that he would advance Germany's request for an armistice, if it looked toward peace—this in reply to Page's message that Great Britain would not receive such a proposal in a kindly spirit—seemed to lay the basis of further misunderstandings. The interview was a disheartening one for Page. Many people whom the Ambassador met in the course of this visit still retain memories of his fervour in what had now become with him a sacred cause. With many friends and officials he discussed the European situation almost like a man inspired. The present writer recalls two long conversations with Page at this time: the recollection of his brilliant verbal portraiture, his description of the determination of Englishmen, his admiration for the heroic sacrifice of Englishwomen, remain as about the most vivid memories of a life-time. And now the Ambassador had brought this same eloquence to the President's ear at Shadow Lawn. It was in this interview that Page had hoped to show Mr. Wilson the real merits of the situation, and persuade him to adopt the course to which the national honour and safety pointed; he talked long and eloquently, paint-

ing the whole European tragedy with that intensity and readiness of utterance and that moral conviction which had so moved all others with whom he had come into contact during this memorable visit to the United States; but Mr. Wilson was utterly cold, utterly unresponsive, interested only in ending the war. The talk lasted for a whole morning; its nature may be assumed from the many letters already printed; but Page's voice, when it attempted to fire the conscience of the President, proved as ineffective as his pen. However, there was nothing *rasping* or contentious about the interview. The two men discussed everything with the utmost calmness and without the slightest indications of ill-nature. Both men had in mind their long association, both inevitably recalled the hopes with which they had begun their official relationship three years before, at that time neither having the faintest intimation of the tremendous problems that were to draw them asunder. Mr. Wilson at this meeting did not impress his Ambassador as a perverse character, but as an extremely pathetic one. Page came away with no vexation or anger, but with a real feeling for a much suffering and a much perplexed statesman. The fact that the President's life was so solitary, and that he seemed to be so completely out of touch with men and with the living thoughts of the world, appealed strongly to Page's sympathies. "I think he is the loneliest man I have ever known," Page remarked to his son Frank after coming away from this visit.

Page felt this at the time, for, as he rose to say good-bye to the President, he put his hand upon his shoulder. At this Mr. Wilson's eyes filled with tears and he gave Page an affectionate good-bye. The two men never met again.

CHAPTER XX

“PEACE WITHOUT VICTORY”

OF ONE thing I am sure,” Page wrote to his wife from Washington, while waiting to see President Wilson. “We wish to come home March 4th at midnight and to go about our proper business. There’s nothing here that I would for the world be mixed up with. As soon as I can escape with dignity I shall make my bow and exit. . . . But I am not unhappy or hopeless for the long run. They’ll find out the truth some day, paying, I fear, a heavy penalty for delay. But the visit here has confirmed me in our previous conclusions—that if we can carry the load until March 4th, midnight, we shall be grateful that we have pulled through.”

Soon after President Wilson’s reëlection, therefore, Page sent his resignation to Washington. The above quotation shows that he intended this to be more than a “courtesy resignation,” a term traditionally applied to the kind of leave-takings which Ambassadors usually send on the formation of a new administration, or at the beginning of a new Presidential term, for the purpose of giving the President the opportunity of reorganizing his official family. Page believed that his work in London had been finished, that he had done everything in his power to make Mr. Wilson see the situation in its true light and that he had not succeeded. He therefore wished to give up his post and come home. This explains the fact that his resignation did not consist of the half dozen perfunctory lines which most diplomatic officers find sufficient on

such an occasion, but took the form of a review of the reasons why the United States should align itself on the side of the Allies.

To the President

London, November 24, 1916.

• DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

We have all known for many years that the rich and populous and organized states in which the big cities are do not constitute the political United States. But, I confess, I hardly expected so soon to see this fact proclaimed at the ballot-box. To me that's the surprise of the election. And your popular majority as well as your clear majority in the Electoral College is a great personal triumph for you. And you have remade the ancient and demoralized Democratic party. Four years ago it consisted of a protest and of the wreck wrought by Mr. Bryan's long captaincy. This rebirth, with a popular majority, is an historical achievement—of your own.

You have relaid the foundation and reset the pillars of a party that may enjoy a long supremacy for domestic reasons. Now, if you will permit me to say so, from my somewhat distant view (four years make a long period of absence) the big party task is to build up a clearer and more positive foreign policy. We are in the world and we've got to choose what active part we shall play in it—I fear rather quickly. I have the conviction, as you know, that this whole round globe now hangs as a ripe apple for our plucking, if we use the right ladder while the chance lasts. I do not mean that we want or could get the apple for ourselves, but that we can see to it that it is put to proper uses. What we have to do, in my judgment, is to go back to our political fathers for our clue. If my long-time memory be good, they were sure that their establish-

ment of a great free Republic would soon be imitated by European peoples—that democracies would take the place of autocracies in all so-called civilized countries; for that was the form that the fight took in their day against organized Privilege. But for one reason or another—in our life-time partly because we chose so completely to isolate ourselves—the democratic idea took root in Europe with disappointing slowness. It is, for instance, now perhaps for the first time, in a thoroughgoing way, within sight in this Kingdom. The dream of the American Fathers, therefore, is not yet come true. They fought against organized Privilege exerted from over the sea. In principle it is the same fight that we have made, in our domestic field, during recent decades. Now the same fight has come on a far larger scale than men ever dreamed of before.

It isn't, therefore, for merely doctrinal reasons that we are concerned for the spread of democracy nor merely because a democracy is the only scheme of organization yet wrought out that keeps the door of opportunity open and invites all men to their fullest development. But we are interested in it because under no other system can the world be made an even reasonably safe place to live in. For only autocracies wage aggressive wars. Aggressive autocracies, especially military autocracies, must be softened down by peace (and they have never been so softened) or destroyed by war. The All-Highest doctrine of Germany to-day is the same as the Taxation-without-Representation of George III—only more virulent, stronger, and farther-reaching. Only by its end can the German people recover and build up their character and take the permanent place in the world that they—thus changed—will be entitled to. They will either reduce Europe to the vassalage of a military autocracy, which

may then overrun the whole world or drench it in blood, or they must through stages of Liberalism work their way toward some approach to a democracy; and there is no doubt which event is impending. The Liberal idea will win this struggle, and Europe will be out of danger of a general assault on free institutions till some other autocracy which has a military caste try the same Napoleonic game. The defeat of Germany, therefore, will make for the spread of the doctrine of our Fathers and our doctrine yet.

An interesting book might be made of concrete evidences of the natural antipathy that the present German autocracy has for successful democracy and hence for us. A new instance has just come to me. My son, Arthur, who succeeded to most of my activities at home, has been over here for a month and he has just come from a visit to France. In Paris he had a long conversation with Delcassé, who told him that the Kaiser himself once made a proposal to him to join in producing "the complete isolation" of the United States. What the Kaiser meant was that if the great Powers of Europe would hold off, he would put the Monroe Doctrine to the test and smash it.

The great tide of the world will, by reason of the war, now flow toward democracy—at present, alas! a tide of blood. For a century democracies and Liberal governments have kept themselves too much isolated, trusting prematurely and too simply to international law and treaties and Hague conventions. These things have never been respected, except as springes to catch woodcock, where the Divine Right held sway. The outgrowing or the overthrow of the Divine Right is a condition precedent to the effectiveness of international law and treaties.

It has seemed to me, looking at the subject only with reference to our country's duty and safety, that somehow

and at some early time our championship of democracy must lead us to redeclare our faith and to show that we believe in our historic creed. Then we may escape falling away from the Liberal forces of the Old World and escape the suspicion of indifference to the great scheme of government which was set up by our fathers' giving their blood for it. I see no other way for us to take the best and biggest opportunity that has ever come to prove true to our faith as well as to secure our own safety and the safety of the world. Only some sort of active and open identification with the Allies can put us in effective protest against the assassins of the Armenians and the assassins of Belgium, Poland, and Serbia, and in a friendly attitude to the German people themselves, as distinguished from their military rulers. This is the attitude surely that our fathers would have wished us to take—and would have expected us to take—and that our children will be proud of us for taking; for it is our proper historic attitude, whether looked at from the past or looked back at from the future. There can be no historic approval of neutrality for years, while the world is bleeding to death.

The complete severance of relations, diplomatic at first and later possibly economic as well, with the Turks and the Germans, would probably not cost us a man in battle nor any considerable treasure; for the moral effect of withdrawing even our formal approval of their conduct—at least our passive acquiescence—would be—that the Germans would see that practically all the Liberal world stands against their system, and the war would end before we should need to or could put an army in the field. The Liberal Germans are themselves beginning to see that it is not they, but the German system, that is the object of attack because it is *the* dangerous thing in the world. Maximilian Harden presents this view in his

Berlin paper. He says in effect that Germany must get rid of its predatory feudalism. That was all that was the matter with George III.

Among the practical results of such action by us would, I believe, be the following:

1. The early ending of the war and the saving of, perhaps, millions of lives and of incalculable treasure;

2. The establishment in Germany of some form of more liberal government;

3. A league to enforce peace, ready-made, under our guidance—i.e., the Allies and ourselves;

4. The sympathetic coöperation and the moral force of every Allied Government in dealing with Mexico:

5. The acceptance—and even documentary approval—of every Allied Government of the Monroe Doctrine;

6. The warding off and no doubt the final prevention of danger from Japan, and, most of all, the impressive and memorable spectacle of our Great Democracy thus putting an end to this colossal crime, merely from the impulse and necessity to keep our own ideals and to lead the world right on. We should do for Europe on a large scale essentially what we did for Cuba on a small scale and thereby usher in a new era in human history.

I write thus freely, Mr. President, because at no time can I write in any other way and because I am sure that all these things can quickly be brought to pass under your strong leadership. The United States would stand, as no other nation has ever stood in the world—predominant and unselfish—on the highest ideals ever reached in human government. It is a vision as splendid as the Holy Grael. Nor have I a shadow of doubt of the eager and faithful following of our people, who would thereby reëstablish once for all our weakened nationality. We are made of the stuff that our Fathers were made of.

And I write this now for the additional reason that I am within sight of the early end of my service here. When you called me I answered, not only because you did me great honour and laid a definite patriotic duty on me, but because also of my personal loyalty to you and my pride in helping forward the great principles in which we both believe. But I understood then (and I am sure the subject lay in your mind in the same way) that my service would be for four years at the most. I made all my arrangements, professional and domestic, on this supposition. I shall, therefore, be ready to lay down my work here on March 4th or as soon thereafter as meets your pleasure.

I am more than proud of the confidence that you have shown in me. To it I am indebted for the opportunity I have had to give such public service to my country as I could, as well as for the most profitable experience of my life. A proper and sympathetic understanding between the two English-speaking worlds seems to me the most important duty of far-seeing men in either country. It has taken such a profound hold on me that I shall, in whatever way I can, work for its complete realization as long as I can work for anything.

I am, Mr. President, most faithfully and gratefully yours,

WALTER H. PAGE.

This letter was written at a time when President Wilson was exerting his best energies to bring about peace. The Presidential campaign had caused him to postpone these efforts, for he believed that neither Germany nor Great Britain could take seriously the activities of a President whose own political position was insecure. At the time Page's letter was received, the President was thinking only

of a peace based upon a stalemate; it was then his apparent conviction that both sides to the struggle were about equally in the wrong and that a decisive victory of either would not be a good thing for the world. Yet it is interesting to compare this letter with the famous speech which the President made six months afterward when he asked Congress to declare the existence of a state of war with Germany. Practically all the important reasons which Mr. Wilson then advanced for this declaration are found in Page's letter of the preceding November. That autocracies are a constant menace to world peace, that the United States owes it to its democratic tradition to take up arms against the enemy of free government, that in doing this, it was not making war upon the German people, but upon its imperialistic masters—these were the arguments which Page laid before the President in his letter of resignation, and these were the leading ideas in Mr. Wilson's address of April 2nd. There are even sentences in Page's communication which seem to foreshadow Mr. Wilson's assertion that "The world must be made safe for democracy." This letter in itself sufficiently makes it clear that Page's correspondence, irritating in its later phases as it may have been, strongly influenced Mr. Wilson in his final determination on war.

On one point, indeed, Colonel House afterward called the Ambassador to account. When America was preparing to raise armies by the millions and to spend its treasure by the billions, he reminded Page of his statement that the severance of diplomatic relations "would probably not cost us a man in battle nor any considerable treasure." Page's statement in this November letter merely reiterated a conviction which for more than a year he had been forcing upon the President and Colonel House—that the dismissal of Bernstorff would not neces-

sarily imply war with Germany, but that it would in itself be enough to bring the war to an end. On this point Page never changed his mind, as is evident from the letter which he wrote to Colonel House when this matter was called to his attention:

To Edward M. House

London, June 29, 1917.

MY DEAR HOUSE:

I never put any particular value on my own prophecies nor on anybody else's. I have therefore no pride as a prophet. Yet I do think that I hit it off accurately a year or a year and a half ago when I said that we could then have ended the war without any appreciable cost. And these are my reasons:

If we had then come in and absolutely prevented supplies from reaching Germany, as we are now about to do, the war would then have been much sooner ended than it can now be ended:

(1) Our supplies enabled her to go on.

(2) She got time in this way to build her great submarine fleet. She went at it the day she promised the President to reform.

(3) She got time and strength to overrun Rumania whence she got food and oil; and continues to get it.

(4) During this time Russia fell down as a military force and gave her more time, more armies for France and more supplies. Russian guns have been sold to the Germans.

If a year and a half ago we had starved her out, it would have been over before any of these things happened. This delay is what will cost us billions and billions and men and men.

And it cost us one thing more. During the neutrality

period we were as eager to get goods to the little neutral states which were in large measure undoubtedly bound to Germany as we are now eager to keep them out. Grey, who was and is our best friend, and who was unwilling to quarrel with us more than he was obliged to, was thrown out of office and his career ended because the blockade, owing to his consideration for us, was not tight enough. Our delay caused his fall.

But most of all, it gave the Germans time (and to some extent material) to build their present fleet of submarines. They were at work on them all the while and according to the best opinion here they continue to build them faster than the British destroy them; and the submarines are destroying more merchant ships than all the shipbuilding docks of all the world are now turning out. This is the most serious aspect of the war—by far the most serious. I am trying to get our Government to send over hundreds of improvised destroyers—armed tugs, yachts, etc., etc. Admiral Sims and the British Admiralty have fears that unless such help come the full fruits of the war may never be gathered by the Allies—that some sort of a compromise peace may have to be made.

It is, therefore, true that the year and a half we waited after the *Lusitania* will prove to be the most costly year and a half in our history; and for once at least my old prophecy was quite a good guess. But that water has flowed over the dam and it is worth mentioning now only because you challenged me. . . .

That part of Page's letter which refers to his retirement had a curious history. It was practically a resignation and therefore called for an immediate reply, but Mr. Wilson did not even acknowledge its receipt. For two months the Ambassador was left in the dark as to the atti-

tude of Washington. Finally, in the latter part of January, 1917, Page wrote urgently to Mr. Lansing, asking him to bring the matter to the President's attention. On February 5, 1917, Mr. Lansing's reply was received. "The President," he said, "under extreme pressure of the present situation, has been unable to consider your communication in regard to your resignation. He desires me to inform you that he hopes that, at the present time, you will not press to be relieved from service; that he realizes that he is asking you to make a personal sacrifice, but he believes that you will appreciate the importance, in the crisis which has developed, that no change should be made. I hardly need to add my personal hope that you will put aside any thought of resigning your post for the present."

At this time, of course, any idea of retiring was out of the question. The President had dismissed Bernstorff and there was every likelihood that the country would soon be at war. Page would have regarded his retirement at this crisis as little less than the desertion of his post. Moreover, since Mr. Wilson had adopted the policy which the Ambassador had been urging for nearly two years, and had sent Bernstorff home, any logical excuse that may have existed for his resignation existed no longer. Mr. Wilson had now adopted a course which Page could enthusiastically support.

"I am happy to serve here at any sacrifice"—such was his reply to Mr. Lansing—"until after the end of the war, and I am making my arrangements to stay for this period."

The months that intervened between the Presidential election and the declaration of war were especially difficult for the American Embassy in London. Page had informed the President, in the course of his interview of September 22nd, how unfavourably Great Britain re-

garded his efforts in the direction of peace; he had in fact delivered a message from the Foreign Office that any Presidential attempt to "mediate" would be rejected by the Allies. Yet his earnest representation on this point had produced no effect upon Mr. Wilson. The pressure which Germany was bringing to bear upon Washington was apparently irresistible. Count Bernstorff's memoirs, with their accompanying documents, have revealed the intensity of the German efforts during this period; the most startling fact revealed by the German Ambassador is that the Kaiser, on October 9th, notified the President, almost in so many words, that, unless he promptly moved in the direction of peace, the German Government "would be forced to regain the freedom of action which it has reserved to itself in the note of May 4th last."¹ It is unlikely that the annals of diplomacy contain many documents so cool and insolent as this one. It was a notification from the Kaiser to the President that the so-called "*Sussex* pledge" was not regarded as an unconditional one by the Imperial Government; that it was given merely to furnish Mr. Wilson an opportunity to bring the war to an end; and that unless the Presidential attempt to accomplish this were successful, there would be a resumption of the indiscriminate submarine campaign. The curious developments of the next two months are now a familiar story. Possibly because the British Government had notified him, through Page, that his proffer of mediation would be unacceptable, Mr. Wilson moved cautiously and slowly, and Germany became impatient. The successful campaign against Rumania, resulting in the capture of Bucharest on December 6th, and the new vista which it opened to Germany of large food supplies, strengthened the Teutonic purpose. Perhaps Germany,

¹"My Three Years in America," by Count Bernstorff, p. 294.

with her characteristic lack of finesse, imagined that her own open efforts would lend emphasis to Mr. Wilson's pacific exertions. At any rate, on December 12th, just as Mr. Wilson was preparing to launch his own campaign for mediation, Germany herself approached her enemies with a proposal for a peace conference. A few days afterward Page, as the representative of Germany, called at the Foreign Office to deliver the large white envelope which contained the Kaiser's "peace proposal." In delivering this to Lord Robert Cecil, who was acting as Foreign Secretary in the temporary absence of Mr. Balfour, Page emphasized the fact that the American Government entirely disassociated itself from its contents and that he was acting merely in his capacity of "German Ambassador." Two communications from Lord Robert to Sir Cecil Spring Rice, British Ambassador at Washington, tell the story and also reveal that it was almost impossible for Page, even when engaged in an official proceeding, to conceal his contempt for the whole enterprise:

Lord R. Cecil to Sir C. Spring Rice

Foreign Office,
December 18, 1916.

SIR:

The American Ambassador came to see me this morning and presented to me the German note containing what is called in it the "offer of peace." He explained that he did so on instructions of his Government as representing the German Government, and not in any way as representing their own opinions. He also explained that the note must be regarded as coming from the four Central Powers, and as being addressed to all the Entente Powers who were represented by the United States.

He then read to me a telegram from his Government,

but declined to leave me a copy of it. The first part of the telegram explained that the Government of the United States would deeply appreciate a confidential intimation of the response to be made to the German note and that they would themselves have certain representations to make to the Entente Powers, to which they urgently begged the closest consideration. The telegram went on to explain that the Government of the United States had had it in mind for some time past to make such representations on behalf of neutral nations and humanity, and that it must not be thought that they were prompted by the Governments of the Central Powers. They wished us to understand that the note of the Central Powers created a good opportunity for making the American representations, but was not the cause of such representations being made.

I replied that I could of course say nothing to him on such an important matter without consulting my colleagues.

I am, etc.,

ROBERT CECIL.

Lord R. Cecil to Sir C. Spring Rice

Foreign Office,
19 December, 1916.

SIR:

The American Ambassador came to see me this afternoon.

I asked him whether he could tell me why his government were anxious to have confidential information as to the nature of our response to the German peace note.

He replied that he did not know, but he imagined it was to enable them to frame the representations of which he had spoken to me.

I then told him that we had asked the French to draft a reply, and that it would then be considered by the Allies, and in all probability an identic note would be presented in answer to the German note. I thought it probable that we should express our view that it was impossible to deal with the German offer, since it contained no specific proposals.

He said that he quite understood this, and that we should in fact reply that it was an offer "to buy a pig in a poke" which we were not prepared to accept. He added that he thought his Government would fully anticipate a reply in this sense, and he himself obviously approved it.

Then, speaking quite seriously, he said that he had heard people in London treating the German offer with derision, but that no doubt the belligerent governments would treat it seriously.

I said that it was certainly a serious thing, and no doubt would be treated seriously.

I asked him if he knew what would be contained in the proposed representations from his government.

He said that he did not; but as he understood that they were to be made to all the belligerents, he did not think that they could be much more than a pious aspiration for peace; since that was the only thing that was equally applicable to the Germans and to us.

As he was leaving he suggested that the German note might be published in our press.

I am, etc.,

ROBERT CECIL.

This so-called German "peace proposal" began with the statement that the war "had been forced" upon Germany, contained the usual reference to the military might of the Central Powers, and declared that the Fatherland

was fighting for "the honour and liberty of national evolution." It is therefore not surprising that Lord Robert received it somewhat sardonically, especially as the communication contained no specific proposals, but merely a vague suggestion of "negotiations." But another spectacular performance now drove the German manœuvre out of everybody's mind. That President Wilson resented this German interference with his own plans is well known; he did not drop them, however, but on December 18th, he sent his long-contemplated peace communication to all the warring Powers. His appeal took the form of asking that they state the objects for which they were fighting, the Presidential belief evidently being that, if they did this, a common meeting ground might possibly be found. The suggestion that the Allied war aims were not public property, despite the fact that British statesmen had been broadly proclaiming them for three years, caused a momentary irritation in England, but this was not a serious matter, especially as the British Cabinet quickly saw that this request gave them a position of advantage over Germany, which had always refused to make public the terms on which it would end the war. The main substance in this Presidential approach, therefore, would have produced no ill-feeling; as usual, it was a few parenthetical phrases—phrases which were not essential to the main argument—which set the allied countries seething with indignation. The President, this section of his note ran, "takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war, are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small states as secure against aggression and

denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful states now at war.” This idea was elaborated in several sentences of a similar strain, the general purport of the whole passage being that there was little to choose between the combatants, inasmuch as both were apparently fighting for about the same things. Mr. Wilson’s purpose in this paragraph is not obscure; he was making his long expected appearance as a mediator, and he evidently believed that it was essential to this rôle that he should not seem to be prejudiced in favour of either side, but should hold the balance impartially between them.

It is true that a minute reading indicates that Mr. Wilson was merely quoting, or attempting to paraphrase, the statements of the leaders of both sides, but there is such a thing as quoting with approval, and no explanation could convince the British public that the ruler of the greatest neutral nation had not declared that the Allies and the Central Powers stood morally upon the same level. The popular indignation which this caused in Great Britain was so intense that it alarmed the British authorities. The publication of this note in the British press was withheld for several hours, in order to give the Government an opportunity to control the expression of editorial opinion; otherwise it was feared that this would be so unrestrained in its bitterness that relations with the United States might be imperilled. The messages which the London correspondents were permitted to send to the United States were carefully censored for the same reason. The dispatch sent by the Associated Press was the product of a long struggle between the Foreign Office and its London correspondent. The representatives spent half an hour considering whether the American correspondents could cable their country that the note had been received in

England with "surprise and irritation." After much discussion it was decided that "irritation" could not be used, and the message of the Associated Press, after undergoing this careful editing by the Foreign Office, was a weak and ridiculous description of the high state of excitement which prevailed in Great Britain. The fact that the British Foreign Office should have given all this trouble over the expressions sent to American newspapers and should even have spent half an hour debating whether a particular word should be used, almost pathetically illustrates the great care taken by the British Government not to influence American opinion against the Allies.

The Government took the same precautions with its own press in England. When the note was finally released the Foreign Office explicitly directed the London newspapers to comment with the utmost caution and in no case to question the President's sincerity. Most of them acquiesced in these instructions by maintaining silence. There was only one London newspaper, the *Westminster Gazette*, which made even a faint-hearted attempt to explain away the President's statement. From the first day of the war the British people had declared that President Wilson did not understand the issues at stake; and they now declared that this note confirmed their worst forebodings. The comments of the man-in-the-street were unprintable, but more serious than these was the impression which Mr. Wilson's dubious remarks made upon those Englishmen who had always been especially friendly to the United States and who had even defended the President in previous crises. Lord Bryce, who had accepted philosophically the Presidential statement that the United States was not "concerned with the causes" of the war, could not regard so indulgently this latest judgment of Great Britain

and Germany. “Bryce came to see me in a state of great depression,” wrote Page. “He has sent Mr. Wilson a personal letter on this matter.” Northcliffe commanded his newspapers, the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, to discuss the note in a judicial spirit, but he himself told Mr. Page that “everybody is as angry as hell.” When someone attempted to discuss the Wilson note with Mr. Asquith, he brushed the subject away with a despairing gesture. “Don’t talk to me about it,” he said. “It is most disheartening.” But the one man in England who was perhaps the most affected was King George. A man who had attended luncheon at Buckingham Palace on December 21st gave Page a description of the royal distress. The King, expressing his surprise and dismay that Mr. Wilson should think that Englishmen were fighting for the same things in this war as the Germans, broke down.

The world only now understands the dreadful prospect which was opening before Europe at the moment when this Presidential note added a new cause for general despondency. Rumania had collapsed, the first inkling of the Russian revolution had been obtained, the British well knew that the submarine warfare was to be resumed, and British finances were also in a desperate plight. More and more it was becoming evident to the British statesmen that they needed the intervention of the United States. This is the reason why they could not destroy the chances of American help by taking official offense even at what Page, in a communication to the Secretary of State, did not hesitate to call President Wilson’s “insulting words”; and hence their determination to silence the press and to give no outward expression of what they felt. Page’s interview with Lord Robert Cecil on December 26th, while the

Presidential communication was lying on his desk, discloses the real emotions of Englishmen. Apparently Page's frank cables concerning the reception of this paragraph had caused a certain interest in the State Department; at least the Ambassador was instructed to call at the Foreign Office and explain that the interpretation which had been commonly put upon the President's words was not the one which he had intended. At the same time Page was instructed to request the British Foreign Office, in case its reply were "favourable," not to publish it, but to communicate it secretly to the American Government. The purpose of this request is a little obscure; possibly it was the President's plan to use such a favourable reply to force Germany likewise to display an acquiescent mood. The object of Page's call was to present this disclaimer.

Lord Robert Cecil, the son of the late Lord Salisbury,—that same Lord Salisbury whose combats with Secretary Blaine and Secretary Olney form piquant chapters in British-American history—is one of the most able and respected of British statesmen. In his earlier life Lord Salisbury had been somewhat overbearing in his attitude toward the United States; in his later years, however, perhaps owing to the influence of his nephew, Mr. Balfour, his manner had changed. In his attitude toward the United States Lord Robert Cecil reflected only the later phases of his father's career. To this country and to its peaceful ideals he had always been extremely sympathetic, and to Page especially he had never manifested anything but cordiality. Yet it was evident, as Page came into his office this morning, that to Lord Robert, as to every member of the Government, the President's note, with its equivocal phrases, had been a terrible shock. His manner was extremely

courteous, as always, but he made no attempt to conceal his feelings. Ordinarily Lord Robert did not wear his emotions on the surface; but he took occasion on this visit to tell Page how greatly the President's communication had grieved him.

"The President," he said, "has seemed to pass judgment on the allied cause by putting it on the same level as the German. I am deeply hurt."

Page conveyed Mr. Lansing's message that no such inference was justified. But this was not reassuring.

"Moreover," Lord Robert added, "there is one sentence in the note—that in which the President says that the position of neutrals is becoming intolerable—that seems almost a veiled threat."

Page hastened to assure Lord Robert that no threat was intended.

Lord Robert's manner became increasingly serious.

"There is nothing that the American Government or any other human power can do," he remarked slowly and solemnly, "which will bring this war to a close before the Allies have spent their utmost force to secure a victory. A failure to secure such a victory will leave the world at the mercy of the most arrogant and the bloodiest tyranny that has ever been organized. It is far better to die in an effort to defeat that tyranny than to perish under its success."

On any occasion Lord Robert is an impressive or at least a striking and unusual figure; he is tall, lank, and ungainly, almost Lincolnesque in the carelessness of his apparel and the exceeding awkwardness of his postures and manners. His angular features, sharp nose, pale face, and dark hair suggest the strain of ascetism, almost of fanaticism, which runs in the present generation of his family. And the deep sincerity and power of his words on this

occasion made an impression which Page never forgot; they transformed the British statesman into an eloquent, almost an heroic figure. If we are to understand the full tragedy of this moment we must remember that, incredible as it now seems, there was a fear in British officialdom that the United States might not only not pursue a course favourable to the Allies, but that it might even throw its support to Germany. The fear, of course, was baseless; any suggestion of such a policy in the United States would have destroyed any official who had brought it forward; but Lord Robert knew and Page knew that there were insidious influences at work at that time, both in the United States and in Great Britain, which looked in this direction. A group of Americans, whom Page used to refer to as "peace spies," were associated with English pacifists, for the purpose of bringing about peace on almost any terms. These "peace spies" had worked out a programme all their own. The purpose was to compel Great Britain to accept the German terms for ending the war. Unless she did accept them, then it was intended that the American Government should place an embargo on the shipment of foodstuffs and munitions to the Allies. There is little question that the United States, by taking such action, could have ended the war almost instantaneously. Should the food of her people and the great quantities of munitions which were coming from this country be suddenly cut off, there is little likelihood that Great Britain could have long survived. The possibility that an embargo might shut out these supplies had hung over the heads of British statesmen ever since the war began; they knew that the possession of this mighty power made the United States the potential dictator of events; and the fear that it might be used had never ceased to influence their thoughts or their actions. Even while this

interview was taking place, certain anti-British forces in the United States, such as Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia, were urging action of this kind.

“I have always been almost a Pacifist,” Lord Robert continued. “No man has ever hated war worse than I. No man has ever had a more earnest faith that war can be abolished. But European civilization has been murderously assaulted and there is nothing now to do but to defeat this desperate enemy or to perish in the effort. I had hoped that the United States understood what is at stake.”

Lord Robert went on:

“I will go so far as to say that if the United States will come into the war it will decide which will win, freedom or organized tyranny. If the United States shall help the Germans, civilization will perish and it will be necessary to build it up slowly again—if indeed it will ever appear again. If the United States will help the Allies, civilization will triumph.”¹

As to the proposal that the British terms should be conveyed confidentially to Mr. Wilson, Lord Robert said that that would be a difficult thing to do. The President’s note had been published, and it therefore seemed necessary that the reply should also be given to the press. This was the procedure that was ultimately adopted.

Startling as was the sensation caused by the President’s December note, it was mild compared with that which was now to come. Page naturally sent prompt reports of all these conversations to the President and likewise kept him completely informed as to the state of public feeling, but his best exertions apparently did not immediately affect the Wilson policy. The overwhelming fact is that

¹This narrative is based upon memoranda made by Page.

the President's mind was fixed on a determination to compel the warring powers to make peace and in this way to keep the United States out of the conflict. Even the disturbance caused by his note of December 18th did not make him pause in this peace campaign. To that note the British sent a manly and definite reply, drafted by Mr. Balfour, giving in detail precisely the terms upon which the Allies would compose their differences with the Central Powers. The Germans sent a reply consisting of ten or a dozen lines, which did not give their terms, but merely asked again for a conference. Events were now moving with the utmost rapidity. On January 9th, a council of German military chieftains was held at Pless; in this it was decided to resume unrestricted submarine warfare. On January 16th the Zimmermann-Mexico telegram was intercepted; this informed Bernstorff, among other things, that this decision had been made. On January 16th, at nine o'clock in the morning, the American Embassy in London began receiving a long cipher despatch from Washington. The preamble announced that the despatch contained a copy of an address which the President proposed to deliver before the Senate "in a few days." Page was directed to have copies of the address "secretly prepared" and to hand them to the British Foreign Office and to newspapers of the type of the *Nation*, the *Daily News*, and the *Manchester Guardian*—all three newspapers well known for their Pacifist tendencies. As the speech approached its end, this sentence appeared: "It must be a peace without victory." The words greatly puzzled the secretary in charge, for they seemed almost meaningless. Suspecting that an error had been made in transmission, the secretary directed the code room to cable Washington for a verification of the cipher groups. Very soon the answer was received; there

had been no mistake; the Presidential words were precisely those which had been first received: “Peace without victory.” The slips were then taken to Page, who read the document, especially these fateful syllables, with a consternation which he made no effort to conceal. He immediately wrote a cable to President Wilson, telling him of the deplorable effect this sentence would produce and imploring him to cut it out of his speech—with what success the world now knows.

An astonishing feature of this episode is that Page had recently explained to the Foreign Office, in obedience to instructions from Washington, that Mr. Wilson’s December note should not be interpreted as placing the Allies and the Central Powers on the same moral level. Now Mr. Wilson, in this “peace without victory” phrase, had repeated practically the same idea in another form. On the day the speech was received at the Embassy, about a week before it was delivered in the Senate, Page made the following memorandum:

The President’s address to the Senate, which was received to-day (January 16th),¹ shows that he thinks he can play peace-maker. He does not at all understand, (or, if he do, so much the worse for him) that the Entente Powers, especially Great Britain and France, cannot make “peace without victory.” If they do, they will become vassals of Germany. In a word, the President does not know the Germans; and he is, unconsciously, under their influence in his thought. His speech plays into their hands.

This address will give great offense in England, since it puts each side in the war on the same moral level.

I immediately saw the grave danger to our relations with

¹It was delivered and published on January 22nd.

Great Britain by the Peace-without-Victory plan; and I telegraphed the President, venturing to advise him to omit that phrase—with no result.

Afterward Page added this to the above:

Compare this Senate speech with his speech in April calling for war: Just when and how did the President come to see the true nature of the German? What made him change from Peace-Maker to War-Maker? The Zimmermann telegram, or the February U-boat renewal of warfare? Had he been so credulous as to believe the German promise? This promise had been continuously and repeatedly broken.

Or was it the pressure of public opinion, the growing impatience of the people that pushed him in?

This distressing peace-move—utterly out of touch with the facts of the origin of the war or of its conduct or of the mood and necessities of Great Britain—a remote, academic deliverance, while Great Britain and France were fighting for their very lives—made a profoundly dejected feeling; and it made my place and work more uncomfortable than ever. “Peace without victory” brought us to the very depths of European disfavour.

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Hendrick, Burton J

Life and letters of Walter
Hines Page

